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Dramatic Publishing

WALK, DON'T RIDE!
A Celebration of the Fight
for Equality

By
PETER MANOS



Dramatic Publishing
Woodstock, Illinois • England • Australia • New Zealand

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(WALK, DON'T RIDE! A Celebration of the Fight for Equality)

ISBN: 978-1-58342-581-7

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Bodwin Theatre Company and Notre Dame Tolerance Resource Center in association with Notre Dame College Choral Club and Notre Dame Masquers presented *WALK, DON'T RIDE! A Celebration of the Fight for Equality* October 19-21, 2007, in the Notre Dame Performing Art Center.

Directed by Peter Manos
Music by Notre Dame Choir
Directed by Sr. Mary Karita Ivancic, SND
Accompanist Sr. Mary Seton Schlather, SND

PART ONE: MONTGOMERY

ROSA PARKS. Chariya Curd
JOANN ROBINSON Marchell Josie
MARTIN LUTHER KING Aaron Smith
CLAUDETTE COLVIN Eris Dyson
CHIEF JUSTICE Prof. Deborah Sheren

PART TWO: NASHVILLE

MAYOR OF NASHVILLE Kevin Cronin
DIANE NASH Crystal Weems
CANDIE CARAWAN Angela Giamei

PART THREE: FREEDOM RIDES

JAMES FARMER. Eris Dyson
HANK. Roderic Scott
WALTER BERGMAN Prof. Stephen Hotchkiss
FRANCES BERGMAN Prof. Frances Ulrich
CHARLOTTE Valerie Subwick
JAMES PECK Mark Levand

NARRATORS Sandra Manos, Valerie Subwick,
Crystal Weems, Joseph Dibartolomeo, Mark Levand,
Angela Giamei, Allison Pickering, Caroline Gonzales

MULTIPLE ROLES Eris Dyson, Allison Pickering,
Mark Levand, Caroline Gonzales

TOLERANCE RESOURCE CENTER COMMITTEE
Rachel Morris, Karen Zoller, MaryAnn Kovach,
Sr. Mary-Louise Trivison, Karen Poelking, Peter Manos

Soprano

Mary Busch	Allison Pickering
Tessa Drayton	Stephanie Pion
Marchell Josie	Shauna Redmond
Sonia Laboy	Rachel Stricklin
Robin Lerch	Sr. Beth Anne Tercek
Margaret Lusnia*	Carli Ventura
Holly Perkins	Erica Witmer
Christine Piatak	

*Choral Club Officer

Alto

Kathleen Betz	Lorene Hynes
Adrianna Caraballo	Shannon McPeck
Chariya Curd	Sr. Jeanne Moenk
Jessica Fiorilli	Tayalia Nash
Ramona Ganesh	Christina Oravec
Angela Giamei	Judy Santmire
Caroline Gonzales	Valerie Subwick
Sr. Patricia Griesmar	Karyn Wargo
Meredith Harbarger	Crystal Weems

Tenor

Justin Germack*
Jonathan Schleicher
Roderic Scott

Prof. Deborah Sheren
Kevin Smith
Ki-Jung Son

Bass

Justin Bertolone
Joseph Dibartolomeo
Michael Kaplan

Mark Levand*
Peter Manos
Justin Tripp

*Choral Club Officer

NOTES ON CASTING AND PRODUCTION

Walk, Don't Ride! is more an acting and singing oratorio than a straight play with blocking. It was designed primarily for school groups.

There are no “bad guys” here. Nobody plays a racist. Everybody is coming together to tell the story and celebrate the participants who fought for change and the righting of very tangible wrongs. The idea is to get as many people involved as possible, to share the experience with everybody in the room, including the audience.

The first performance of *Walk, Don't Ride!* at Notre Dame College used a choir which supplied most of the acting parts as well as some extra actors who did not sing in the lead parts such as Martin Luther King Jr. and Frances and Walter Bergman, who were faculty members. Over 45 people were involved and no parts were doubled. Nevertheless, the play can be done with as little as six to eight people of varying races and sexes. The play need not be memorized but can be read out loud. Pictures of the real people and events involved were projected on a back screen during the performance at Notre Dame. No other set was used and movement was kept to a minimum. Costumes were also minimal.

NOTE ON SONGS

The songs suggested here act as counterpoint and punctuation to the action. The melodies to the music appear in simple vocal form at the back of this volume. No character is assigned a song. In the original production a choir sang the songs, except for a featured soloist on “Go Down, Moses” and a part of “Twelve Gates Into the City” and “Deep River.” A choir can act as ALL as well as sing the songs, which is how it was done in the first production, or cast members who sing can be assigned a song.

NOTES ON HISTORY

Whenever possible real words and accounts from the period supplied by the people who were there were used. Some events were condensed and simplified for dramatic effect. For instance, the Freedom Marches happened after the Bus Boycott and this is where persons were arrested en masse and where hoses were turned on marchers. I have included it as part of the Bus Boycott walk because the marches were a result of the boycott. Also, the Freedom rides were condensed to point up some major events that happened to the riders.

Professor Peter Manos, Communications
Notre Dame College, Cleveland, Ohio

WALK, DON'T RIDE!

A Celebration of the Fight for Equality

CHARACTERS (in order of speaking)

Part One: MONTGOMERY

Narrator #1
Narrator #2
Narrator #3
Rosa Parks
Claudette Colvin
JoAnn Robinson
Woman #1
Woman #2
Narrator #4
Narrator #5
Narrator #6
Martin Luther King Jr.
White Woman
White Man
Chief Justice of the Supreme Court

Part Two: NASHVILLE

Mayor of Nashville
Diane Nash
(Narrator #1)
Candie Carawan
Young White Man
Young Black Man

Part Three: FREEDOM RIDES

Woman in Advertisement
2nd Woman in Advertisement
James Farmer
Charlotte
Hank
Frances Bergman
Walter Bergman
James Peck

Also, I have worked out casting for a small mobile production that could be done by professionals:

For cast of 5 singers/actors (3 women, 2 men):

CLAUDETTE (African-American woman, 20s):

Part One

Narrator #2
Narrator #4
Claudette Colvin
Woman #1

Part Two

Diane Nash

Part Three

Woman in Advertisement
Charlotte

MLK (African-American man, 20s):

Part One

MLK

Part Two

Young black man

Part Three

James Farmer

(Share Jim Peck lines with Walter)

ROSA (African-American woman):

Part One

Rosa Parks

JoAnn Robinson

Woman #2

Part Two

Narrator #1

Part Three

Hank

FRANCES (Caucasian woman):

Part One

Narrator #1

Narrator #5

White Woman

Part Two

Candie Carawan

Young White Man

Part Three

2nd Woman in Advertisement

Frances Bergman

WALTER (Older Caucasian):

Part One

Narrator #3

Narrator #6

White Man

Chief Justice of the Supreme Court

Part Two

Mayor of Nashville

Part Three

Walter Bergman

(Share Jim Peck lines with MLK)

WALK, DON'T RIDE!

A Celebration of the Fight for Equality

PART ONE: MONTGOMERY

NARRATOR #1. There was a time in the history of America when the color of your face decided where you could go and what you could do and how you could live.

NARRATOR #2. There was a time in the history of America when the color of your face told you what public drinking fountain you could use.

NARRATOR #3. There was a time in the history of America when the color of your face told you what swimming pool you could swim in, what washroom you could enter—

NARRATOR #1. How much you had to pay or what test you had to take to vote.

NARRATOR #2. What clubs you could join, what schools you could attend.

NARRATOR #3 & NARRATOR #2. Where you could eat.
ALL. Where you could sit on a bus.

NARRATOR #3. There was a time in the history of America, and some of that time is not completely gone but we're getting there and it started in Alabama.

(SONG: "GO, TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN")

**GO, TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN, OVER THE
HILLS AND EVERYWHERE
GO, TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN
TO MAKE OUR PEOPLE FREE.**

NARRATOR #1. Montgomery, Alabama, 1955.

ALL. Montgomery, Alabama, 1955.

ROSA. December of that year, actually. On a crosstown bus.

NARRATOR #2. When the bus pulls up and takes you from your day of work—

ROSA. A long day.

NARRATOR #1. Montgomery Fair department store. The Christmas rush.

ALL (*a chaos of voices*). "Girl, some service here." "Girl, that ain't my size." "Girl, some service!" "Will somebody ring me up?" "Girl, that ain't the color I want." "I SAID CAN SOMEBODY RING ME UP? GIRL?!"

NARRATOR #2. When the bus pulls up and takes you from your day of work—

NARRATOR #1. If you're white, you pay your fare and go on in. You get the front seat.

NARRATOR #2. If you're black, you pay your fare then get out of the bus and go to the side door to come in.

ROSA. In the rain. Freezing rain.

CLAUDETTE COLVIN (*a teenage black girl*). "Negroes out of the bus get back in at the back," says the bus driver.

ROSA. Sometimes they pull away before you get back in.

NARRATOR #2. If you're black, you sit in the back. If there are no seats you stand. If there are seats in a row but there's a white person in that row, you can't sit there.

ROSA. They don't want the knees of the white people to ever touch the knees of the black people.

NARRATOR #1. When the bus pulls up and takes you from your work in Montgomery, Alabama, December 1, 1955—

CLAUDETTE. Thirty-six seats. Twenty-two Negroes seated in the rear. Fourteen whites seated in the front.

NARRATOR #1. But the bus driver sees there is one white man standing.

ROSA. "Negroes, clear the way," says the bus driver.

NARRATOR #3. Four blacks clear the row so he can sit.

NARRATOR #2. Four blacks stand so one white man can sit.

NARRATOR #1. But the man can't sit yet. One black woman is still sitting. She can't sit in a row with a white. Montgomery city law.

ALL. MONTGOMERY CITY LAW.

ROSA. Yes, Mr. Bus Driver, I heard you. I am not getting up. I had a long day.

ALL. MONTGOMERY LAW.

ROSA. My name is Mrs. Rosa Parks and I am not going to stand up.

NARRATOR #2. December 1, 1955.

NARRATOR #1. Montgomery, Alabama.

(SONG: "TWELVE GATES INTO THE CITY")

**OH, WHAT A BEAUTIFUL CITY
OH, WHAT A BEAUTIFUL CITY
OH, WHAT A BEAUTIFUL CITY, WELL
TWELVE GATES INTO THE CITY, HALLELU
THREE GATES INTO THE EAST
THREE GATES INTO THE WEST
THREE GATES INTO THE NORTH
THREE GATES INTO THE SOUTH
MAKIN' THAT—
TWELVE GATES INTO THE CITY, HALLELU—**

NARRATOR #1. This was not an accident. Rosa Parks was a member of the Montgomery chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

ALL. "N" DOUBLE "A" "C" "P."

NARRATOR #1. She had not been the first person to refuse to give up her seat on a crosstown Montgomery bus. Claudette Colvin, a 15-year-old who was pregnant, had done it first and had been arrested.

CLAUDETTE. They said I was too young, too black, too pregnant. Not the right poster girl for change. Fifteen years old and already lived too much to get up and so I sat while the world yelled at me, arrested me, put me before the judge while I stared them down. But I was passed over by the history books. Nobody trusts the young folks to make change but it's our world too. It's our fight too. Suffer the children to come unto me, said the Lord. Well here we are. Don't ignore us. We ain't goin' away. And don't ignore me—I'm still here. Claudette Colvin.

NARRATOR #2. Upright, hardworking wife and mother Rosa Parks became the representative the African-American community felt more comfortable with as the face of the resistance.

NARRATOR #3. And the bus driver told her she would be arrested if she did not give up her seat.

ROSA. And I said arrest me, then. And they did.

NARRATOR #2. When Rosa was arrested JoAnn Robinson and some friends met at the office of Alabama State at midnight.

JOANN. We told the guard we were there to grade papers.

NARRATOR #3. They drafted a letter and all through the night made copies.

JOANN. If our bosses found out we'd be fired.

ROSA. Seventy-five percent of folk riding the bus are colored folk. If we don't ride, the bus company makes no money.

NARRATOR #1. And they papered the town with their leaflets.

NARRATOR #2. Every Afro-American church, every store—

NARRATOR #3. Friend to friend. Neighbor to neighbor, passed around everywhere—

JOANN, WOMAN #1, WOMAN #2. CITIZENS OF MONTGOMERY!

JOANN. Another Negro woman has been arrested and thrown into jail because she refused to get up out of her seat on the bus and give it to a white person.

WOMAN #1. Until we do something to stop these arrests, they will continue.

WOMAN #2. The next time it may be you—or you—or you.

JOANN. This woman's case will come up Monday. We are, therefore—

WOMAN #1. —asking every Negro—

JOANN, WOMAN #1, WOMAN #2. Stay off the buses on Monday! Protest!

ALL. PROTEST!

JOANN, WOMAN #1, WOMAN #2. Don't ride!

ALL. DON'T RIDE!

JOANN. Take a cab, share a ride, walk.

ALL. WALK!

JOANN. Do not ride the bus! Don't ride!

ALL. DON'T RIDE! PROTEST! DON'T RIDE!

**WHEN I GET TO HEAV'N
I'M GONNA SCREAM AND SHOUT
AIN'T NOBODY UP THERE
WHO'S GONNA PUT ME OUT
OUTA THEM—**

CHORUS.

TWELVE GATES INTO THE CITY, HALLELU—

NARRATOR #4. Seven o'clock Monday morning, whoever had a car picked people up. Whoever drove a taxi had five riders and they shared the fare. And people walked.

ALL. WALK!

NARRATOR #5. Buses went by with one person, two persons on them. Some were empty.

ALL. PROTEST!

NARRATOR #6. Four-, five-, six-mile walk to work.

ALL. DON'T RIDE!

CLAUDETTE. My feet is sore but my soul is full.

ALL. PROTEST!

NARRATOR #4. And at seven o'clock that night crowds gathered at Holt Street Baptist Church.

NARRATOR #5. Thousands packed in. Sitting, standing, listening outside the door.

MARTIN LUTHER KING. You know, my friends, there comes a time when people get tired of being trampled over by the iron feet of oppression...

ALL. AMEN!

MLK. We are here, we are here this evening because we are tired now.

ALL. TIRED!

NARRATOR #4. He was the new minister in Montgomery.

NARRATOR #5. Twenty-six years old, straight from completing his doctoral in divinity in Boston.

MLK. Now let us say that we are not here advocating violence...

ALL. AMEN!

MLK. We believe in the Christian religion.

ALL. AMEN!

MLK. We believe in the teachings of Jesus.

ALL. AMEN!

MLK. The only weapon we have in our hands this evening is the weapon of protest.

ALL. PROTEST!

NARRATOR #6. Son of a minister. Preaching now at Dexter Avenue Baptist Church.

NARRATOR #4. Preaching now on the evening of December 5th, 1955 to a packed church.

MLK. ...This is the glory of America, with all its faults.

This is the glory of our democracy...the great glory of American democracy is the right to protest for right.

ALL. PROTEST PROTEST! DON'T RIDE!

NARRATOR #5. Preaching now to thousands flocking in protest of the arrest of Rosa Parks and the racist practices of the Montgomery Bus and Transit Authority.

MLK. My friends, don't let anybody make us feel that we ought to be compared in our actions with the Ku Klux Klan...

NARRATOR #6. A student of the teachings of India's Mahatma Gandhi.

NARRATOR #4. Advocate of nonviolent protest.

MLK. ... There will be no crosses burned at any bus stops in Montgomery. There will be no white persons pulled out of their homes and taken out to some distant road and murdered.

NARRATOR #6. Reluctant leader sitting on a powder keg of change.

MLK. There will be nobody among us who will stand up and defy the Constitution of this nation. We only assemble here because of our desire to see right exist.

ALL. AMEN.

NARRATOR #5. Married to Coretta. Father of small children.

MLK. Let us go out with a grim and bold determination that we are going to stick together. We are going to work together. Right here in Montgomery—

NARRATOR #5. Twenty-six years old and only thirteen more years to live...

ALL. PROTEST PROTEST! DON'T RIDE!

MLK. Right here in Montgomery when the history books are written in the future, somebody will have to say “There lived a race of people...people who had the moral courage to stand up for their rights.” And thereby injected a new meaning into the veins of history and of civilization.

NARRATORS 4, 5 & 6. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

MLK. And we’re gonna do that. God grant that we will do it before it’s too late.

ALL. AMEN!

MLK. We’re gonna do it. Do I hear amen?

ALL. AMEN!

MLK. DO I HEAR AMEN?

ALL. AMEN!

(SONG: “GO DOWN MOSES”)

**WHEN ISRAEL WAS IN EGYPT’S LAND
LET MY PEOPLE GO
OPPRESSED SO HARD THEY COULD NOT STAND
LET MY PEOPLE GO.
GO DOWN MOSES
WAY DOWN IN EGYPT’S LAND
TELL OLD PHARAOH
LET MY PEOPLE GO**

NARRATOR #1. “We can’t change the law,” said the bus company.

ROSA. “Negroes in the back,” said the bus company.

NARRATOR #2. “It’s in the state constitution,” said the city of Montgomery.

JOANN. “Negroes in the back of the bus,” said the city of Montgomery.

NARRATOR #3. "Don't give in," said the governor of Alabama.

ROSA. "Give them this one thing they'll only want more," said the governor.

MLK. We want there to be some African-American bus drivers.

JOANN. The all-white bus drivers' union said "no way."

ALL. DON'T RIDE.

MLK. All right then. Keep your front-back policy but we want a fair fill up of the buses so nobody has to stand. At least let the middle rows be integrated if the bus is full.

ROSA. "White folk don't want to associate with black folk," said the White Citizens Council of Montgomery.

NARRATOR #4. Don't ride the bus, said the black citizens and many white citizens of Montgomery.

ALL. DON'T RIDE.

MLK. Friends. I know we said this would be over soon. It's not over. Stay off the bus for one more week.

ALL. DON'T RIDE.

NARRATOR #5. Buses rode empty or with just a few people. The bus company lost thousands of dollars every day.

NARRATOR #1. And the people stayed off the buses. Afro-Americans, many whites too. The people stayed off the buses.

CLAUDETTE. My feets is sore but my soul is full. Say it with me.

ALL. MY FEETS IS SORE BUT MY SOUL IS FULL!

CLAUDETTE. Amen.

ALL. AMEN!