

A
PEACOCK
AMONG
PIGEONS™

A PEACOCK AMONG PIGEONS

**Music & Lyrics
by John Bucchino**

Based on the book by Tyler Curry and illustrated by Clarione Gutierrez

Commissioned by Boston Gay Men's Chorus, Reuben M. Reynolds III, Music Director
and San Diego Gay Men's Chorus, RC Haus, Artistic Director

Arranged and orchestrated by Chad Weirick

SYNOPSIS:

Peter the peacock finds himself living among a flock of pigeons who are very mean to him. They constantly make him aware that he's laughably different, and that he doesn't belong. He tries everything to fit in, but eventually realizes that if he's ever to have a joyful life, he needs to leave the flock. As he ventures into the world, he meets other colorful birds who, little by little, convince him that what the pigeons said was "weird," "flamboyant," and "unacceptable" is actually unique, beautiful, and worthy of appreciation and love.

01. OPENING

[A flock of pigeons are pecking around onstage.]

Pigeons:

BOB AND PECK, STEP STEP AND PECK AND
BOB AND PECK, STEP STEP AND PECK AND
BOB AND PECK, STEP STEP AND PECK AND
BOB AND PECK, STEP STEP AND PECK AND...

Chorus:

BEHOLD THE PIGEON
PREDICTABLE BIRD
WITHOUT A SMIDGEON OF SMARTS

FIRST ONE IS JUST LIKE
THE SECOND AND THIRD
VERY SMALL-MINDED
TOTALLY BLINDED TO
ANYTHING BRIGHT

ANYONE DIFFERENT
GIVES 'EM A FRIGHT
FIGHT OR FLIGHT
THEN THEY BITE
THESE BACKWARD-THINKING BIRDS
THEY BITE WITH BITING WORDS

[Peter Peacock enters.]

Pigeons:

WEIRDO, ODDBALL, ANNOYING
STUPID GEEK
SHOWOFF, MISFIT , BIZARRO
RAINBOW FREAK

Chorus:

ADD TO THIS PICTURE
A SENSITIVE SOUL
ONE PETER PEACOCK BY NAME

Peter (to pigeons):

"Hey guys..."

Chorus:

THROUGH CIRCUMSTANCES BEYOND HIS CONTROL
FOUND HIMSELF STUCK HERE
HE'S THE ODD DUCK HERE

FLASHY AS THEY ARE DRAB, HE
WISHES THEY WEREN'T SO CRABBY

NOTHING HE DOES IS RIGHT
HIS EVERY MOVE WEIRD OR... DUMB-ISH
WHEN YOU STICK OUT SORE-...THUMB-ISH
YOU TRY TO NOT SWISH OR FLIT IN – NO
YOU DO WHAT YOU CAN TO FIT IN – SO...

Pigeons and Peter:

BOB AND PECK, STEP STEP AND PECK AND
BOB AND PECK, STEP STEP AND PECK AND
BOB AND PECK, STEP STEP AND PECK AND
BOB AND PECK...

Peter (starts to unfurl his gorgeous tail, then stops):
...AND FAN THAT TAIL! Oops...

Pigeons:

FRUITCAKE, OUTCAST, OBNOXIOUS
FLAKY DORK...

Chorus:

HE TRIES TO TALK TO THEM
TO FIND A COMMON BOND

Peter:

I'm certain that underneath, we're more similar than different, with many shared
beliefs, goals, aspirations...

Chorus:

AND THIS IS HOW THEY RESPOND:

Pigeons:

LOSER, CREAMPUFF, PECULIAR
WIMPY NERD

Chorus:

ONE TIME HE EVEN TRIED LOOKING LIKE THEM
BOUND UP HIS TAIL TILL IT HURT
AND COVERED HIMSELF WITH DIRT

DIMMING HIS DAZZLING HUES
MUDDYING SHINE WITH MURK
NOT VERY SHOCKING NEWS:
IT DIDN'T WORK

A RAINSTORM WASHED HIS FEATHERS CLEAN
BROWN WAS ONCE MORE BLUE AND GREEN
AND THE PIGEONS KEPT RIGHT ON BEING MEAN

Pigeons:

CRACKPOT, WORTHLESS, ECCENTRIC
SILLY TWIT...

Chorus:

HE TRIES EXPLAINING HOW THEIR COMMENTS MAKE HIM FEEL
THE DAMAGE THAT WORDS CAN DO
HOW PAINFULLY HE RECEIVES THEM

BUT MORE AND MORE THE POISONED THINGS THEY SAY SEEM REAL
TILL EVENTUALLY
EVEN HE
BELIEVES THEM...

Peter with Pigeons:

WEIRDO, ODDBALL, ANNOYING
STUPID GEEK
SHOWOFF, MISFIT, BIZARRO
RAINBOW FREAK

Chorus:

AND FINALLY, AS THEY TEASE
AT THE HEIGHT OF THEIR REJECTION
HE COMES UPON A PUDDLE
AND THIS IS WHAT HE SEES
LOOKING DOWN ON HIS REFLECTION:

Peter:

AN UGLY THING
THE HOMELIEST OF CREATURES
A LAUGHING STOCK, A CLOWN
WITH GAUDY, GARISH FEATURES
THIS FOOLISH FEATHER CROWN
THIS HUMILIATING TAIL
FAR TOO GIRLY FOR A BOY BIRD
WHY COULDN'T IT BE BROWN?

WHY COULDN'T I BE LIKE THEM?
AND BLEND INTO THE CROWD
IF MY COLORS WEREN'T SO LOUD
I COULD WALK AROUND UNNOTICED
INVISIBLE, AND MAYBE EVEN PROUD...

IT'S SAFE TO BE THE SAME
JUST ONE AMONG THE HORDE
ACCEPTED AND IGNORED
NO RIDICULE
NO SHAME

IT'S SAFE TO BE A CLONE
ANOTHER GRAIN OF SAND
CONVENTIONAL AND BLAND
NOT STANDING THERE
ALONE

LONELY, I GUESS, IS ALL I'LL EVER BE
LEFT OUT AND SET APART
JUDGEMENT, I FEAR, IS ALL I'LL EVER SEE
IN THE EYES OF THOSE I MEET
TO SAY I'M SOMEHOW INCOMPLETE
A MESSAGE CLEAR AND STRONG:
"YOU DON'T BELONG"

IT'S SAFE TO BE ALIKE
THERE'S NOTHING TO CONDEMN
BUT I CAN'T BE LIKE THEM
I'VE TRIED
I'VE CRIED
I'VE DONE MY BEST TO HIDE

THERE'S NOT A THING THAT I CAN DO OR SAY
IF HAPPINESS IS ANYWHERE, IT'S SOMEWHERE ELSE
AND SO, I KNOW
I HAVE TO GO
AWAY.

02. EXTR'ORDINARY

Chorus:

DEAR PETER WANDERS FOR HOURS AND HOURS
ALONE, BUT GLAD TO BE FREE
HE STOPS TO LOOK AT SOME INT'RESTING FLOWERS
WHEN SUDDENLY SOMETHING CATCHES HIS EYE WAY UP IN A TREE

REDDER THAN CHERRY JELLO
WHO IS THAT DAZZLING FELLOW?

[Craig enters]

Craig:

HELLO!
I'm Craig, I'm a cardinal.

Peter:

(Shyly) I'm Peter. I'm... something...

Craig:

You certainly are!

Peter:

(Sizing him up) I didn't know a bird could be that color.

Craig:

A bird can be almost any color you can imagine. And just when I think I've seen 'em all,
here you come, lookin' like you got caught in a paintball fight!

Peter:

(Dejected) I know. It's tragic.

Craig:

No! It's magic!

BRIGHTEN UP, YOU GLOOMY GUS
THERE'S A WORD WE MUST DISCUSS
IT'S THE WORD FOR BIRDS LIKE US
WE'RE EXTR'ORDINARY!

Peter:

Extr'ordinary?

Craig:

ORDINARY ISN'T CHIC
THE "EXTRA" MEANS THAT WE'RE UNIQUE

FROM THE TAIL UP TO THE BEAK
WE'RE EXTR'ORDINARY!

QUITE THE SUIT YOU'VE GOT, KID
NEVER SEEN ONE LIKE IT

Peter:

Too much?

Craig:

No!
TELL YOU WHAT YOU'RE NOT, KID
RUN-OF-THE-MILL
YOU JUST GOTTA CHILL AND

KEEP A TWINKLE IN YOUR EYE
SKIES MAY SPRINKLE, BUT DON'T YOU CRY
ON THE INSIDE YOU'LL STAY WARM AND DRY
YOU'RE EXTR'ORDINARY!

Craig & Chorus:

IF EVERYTHING WAS THE SAME...

Craig:

THERE WOULDN'T BE A PLATYPUS

Peter:

OR A HIPPOPOTAMUS!

Craig & Chorus:

IF EVERYTHING WAS THE SAME

Craig:

NO MARABOU...

Peter:

NO CARIBOU...

Craig:

NO KINKAJOU...

Craig & Peter:

NO KANGAROO...

Peter:

THERE WOULDN'T BE YOU...

Craig:
AND THERE WOULDN'T BE YOU!

Peter:
NO ARMADILLA?

Craig:
AIN'T THAT A KILLA!

Peter:
NO KOALA?

Craig:
THAT'S HARD TO SWALLA!

Peter & Chorus (horrified):
NO LADY GAGA?!?

[Music stops abruptly]

Craig:
I have absolutely no idea what that is.

[Craig and Peter dance during this next, mostly instrumental, section.]

Chorus:
BUM BUM BUM BUM BUM BUM BUM
BUM BUM BUM BUM BUM BUM BUM
BUM BUM BUM BUM BUM BUM BUM BUM
EXTR'ORDINARY!

BUM... BUM BUM BUM...
BUM... BUM BUM BUM
...BUM ...BUM ...BUM ...BUM
EXTR'ORDINARY!

Craig:
SOME WILL TRY TO TELL YOU
DIFF'RENT ISN'T SPECIAL
BUT THEY CAN ONLY SELL YOU
IF YOU AGREE

Peter:
I did...

Craig:

LISTEN TO ME KID:
STARE YOUR FEARS RIGHT IN THE FACE
SO-CALLED FLAWS YOU CAN'T ERASE
ARE THE VERY THINGS YOU MUST EMBRACE
THEY'RE EXTR'ORDINARY...
THINK EXTR'ORDINARY...
LIVE EXTR'ORDINARY AND YOU'LL SEE
HOW IT FEELS TO BE EXTR'ORDINARY
LIKE ME!

See ya later, kid. I gotta fly!

[Craig exits]

03. EXTR'ORDINARY CODA

Chorus:

PETER HEARD WHAT CRAIG HAD SAID
AND THOUGH IT STIRRED IN-SIDE HIS HEAD,
SELF DOUBTS ARE NOT SO EASILY SHED WHEN YOU FEEL LESS THAN ORDINARY

STILL, A SEED WAS PLANTED AND IT SLOWLY GREW.

Peter:

THINGS I TOOK FOR GRANTED...

Pigeons (as a memory):

SHOWOFF, MISFIT, BIZARRO RAINBOW FREAK

Peter:

...WERE BEGINNING TO NOT FEEL QUITE SO TRUE.

04. INTERLUDE 1

Chorus:

AND SOMEHOW, BIT BY BIT,
THE WORLD WILL TEACH US
TO BE OUR BEST SELVES
A WINDING ROAD WITH DIPS AND CLIMBS:
NOW A STUNNING VISTA, NOW A PITCH-DARK BOWER
BUT EVER UPWARD, WITH TANTALIZING GLIMPSES
OF A CLOUDLESS, PANORAMIC VIEW.

05. Henry's Song

Chorus:

FLAP FLAP FLAP FLAP FLAP FLAP FLAP FLAP... etc. (whenever Henry's agitated)

Henry (A hummingbird, running onstage flapping frantically, in a total panic.):

DO YOU SEE THEM? ARE THEY COMING?

Peter:

Who?

Henry:

THE CROWS -- THEY'RE ALWAYS AFTER ME!
THEY CHASE ME AND THEY SCARE ME
AND THEY CALL ME NAMES BECAUSE I'M LITTLE
I'M AFRAID THAT SOMEDAY IT'LL
MAKE ME HAVE A HEART ATTACK!

I'M SUCH A WRECK, MY CHEST IS THUMPING
AS MY TINY WINGS KEEP PUMPING
EVERY NERVE I HAVE IS JUMPING!

(Suddenly he stops flapping and is instantly, comically, completely calm and quizzical.)

Who are you?

Peter:

I'm Peter.

Henry:

I'm Henry.

(As if someone flipped a switch, he's back in frantic flapping mode again, flitting around in a tizzy.)

I'M SUCH A WRECK I'M ALL UPTIGHT,
EMOTIONAL, THEY CALL ME FLIGHTY
WHAT MAKES THEM SO HIGH AND MIGHTY?

(He abruptly stops flapping and is completely calm again.)

You're feathers are *beautiful!*

Peter:

Thank y...

(Before Peter can get the word out, Henry interrupts, in frantic flapping mode again.)

Henry:

IT'S ALL TOO MUCH, THEY MAY BE RIGHT
THEY SAY THAT I'M A SPACE CADET,
A PIPSQUEAK AND A WEAKLING,
BET THEY FIND ME ANY MINUTE -- HECK,
I'M SUCH A VERY NERVOUS WRECK
I'M SURE I'LL HAVE A HEART ATTACK!

Peter (Trying to pacify him.):

WAIT A MINUTE, HENRY
SLOW IT DOWN, LET'S TALK THIS THROUGH
YOU MAY BE SMALL, BUT CAN THOSE CROWS
DO HALF THE THINGS THAT YOU CAN DO?

CAN THEY FLAP THEIR WINGS AS FAST?

Henry (somewhat calmer):

HMMMMMMM...

Peter:

CAN THEY HOVER IN ONE SPOT?

Henry:

HMMMMMMM...

Peter:

CAN THEY DART AROUND AS QUICKLY?

Henry:

HMMMMMMM...

Peter:

I WOULD BET THAT THEY CANNOT.

ARE THEY ACROBATIC WONDERS?

Henry:

Not so much.

Peter:

ARE THEIR FEATHERS IRIDESCENT?

Henry:

Not like mine.

Peter:

CAN THEY REALLY BE SUPERIOR
WHEN THEY ACT SO ADOLESCENT?
AND THINK OF THIS:
THEY KEEP THE INSULTS COMING
BUT YOU JUST GO RIGHT ON HUMMING!

Henry (Somewhat calmly):

HMMMMMM... YOU HAVE A POINT THERE
HMMMMMM... THAT DOES MAKE SENSE
HMMMMMM... IT'S VERY HELPFUL

(With increasing agitation)

BUT WHEN THEY SHRIEK IT'S SO INTENSE...THAT...

(Back in frantic flapping mode)

I WORRY THAT THEY SEE
THE VERY THINGS I FEEL ARE WRONG WITH ME
I WORRY THAT THEY THINK
A BACKBONE ISN'T VERY STRONG WITH ME
I WORRY THAT THEY KNOW
A NERVOUS BREAKDOWN WON'T TAKE LONG WITH ME...

(He sees Sara, a canary, offstage and, calm again, calls out to her.)

Sara! Hello!

(He runs offstage toward her.)

06. INTERLUDE 2

Chorus:

AND THEN, IN SOMEONE ELSE,
WE'LL SEE A MIRROR...

Peter:

IT'S SO UNKIND
THE WAY THEY PICK ON HIM...

Chorus:

...THEY SHARE A PROBLEM
AND, IF WE HELP, WE HELP OURSELVES

NOW A CLEAR REFLECTION
NOW A NEW PERSPECTIVE...

Henry (Entering with Sara):

Peter, this is my canary friend, Sara.

07. KEEP IT LIGHT

Sara:

So good to meet you, Peter. I hear you've been calming Henry down.

Peter:

I've been trying...

Sara:

He works himself into such a tizzy, poor little fella. I keep telling him:

IT'S NOT BRAIN SURGERY
FRETTING EACH MOMENT AWAY
LIKE THE OUTCOME MEANS LIFE OR DEATH
TAKE A DEEP BREATH, ASSUME YOUR FULL HEIGHT
HAVE A SWIM ON A WHIM
KEEP IT LIGHT!

WE ARE SO FEATHERY
WHETHER EMITTING A SQUAWK
OR A GLORIOUS TRILL LIKE ME
YOU ARE LEAD-FREE, SO MAKE LIKE A KITE
TAKE A DARE, SHED A CARE
KEEP IT LIGHT!

THERE ARE SUCH HEAVY BOULDERS AND FREIGHTERS
THOSE SCOLDERS AND HATERS WEIGH JUST AS MUCH
EITHER MALICE AND RANCOR WILL ANCHOR US
OR WE CAN SAIL WITH A LIGHTER TOUCH

TIME TO TIME, CERTAINLY,
THINGS WILL BE SCARY
AND TRUST THIS CANARY, I'VE SEEN A FEW
BUT WHEN I DO, I SIMPLY RECITE:
KEEP IT LIGHT! KEEP IT LIGHT! KEEP IT LIGHT!

Chorus (while Sara sings an obligato):

IT'S NOT BRAIN SURGERY
FRETTING EACH MOMENT AWAY
LIKE THE OUTCOME MEANS LIFE OR DEATH
TAKE A DEEP BREATH, ASSUME YOUR FULL HEIGHT
HAVE A SWIM ON A WHIM
KEEP IT LIGHT!

YOU ARE SO FEATHERY
WHETHER EMITTING A SQUAWK
OR A GLORIOUS TRILL LIKE SHE

Peter & Henry:

WE'RE SO FEATHERY
WHETHER WE SQUAWK,
OR SQUEEK, OR TRILL LIKE SHE DOES

YOU ARE LEAD-FREE, SO MAKE LIKE A KITE
TAKE A DARE, SHED A CARE
KEEP IT LIGHT!

IT'S THRILLING TO SING OUR OWN SONG
FEELING FEARLESS AND STRONG
AS WE MERRILY ROLL ALONG!

Sara, Peter, Henry and Chorus:

THOUGH THERE ALWAYS ARE PITFALLS AND STUMBLES
THE COOKIE THAT CRUMBLES IS JUST AS SWEET
NEITHER DARKNESS NOR PAIN ARE PERPETUAL
SMILE AND I BETCHYOUW'LL HAVE THEM BEAT

DANCE ALONG PLAYFULLY
STAY FULLY OPEN TO LAUGHTER
AND AFTER EACH DAY IS DONE
DREAM OF MORE FUN THROUGHOUT THE LONG NIGHT
AND THOUGH BEDBUGS MAY BITE
(WHICH IS QUITE IMPOLITE)
THERE IS SUNSHINE IN SIGHT
KEEP IT LIGHT!

08. PETER MEETS OWEN

[Sara introduces Peter to Owen the owl. He's imposing and beneficent - a cross between Yoda, Oprah, and James Earl Jones.]

Sara:

PETER, THIS IS OWEN
THE WISEST BIRD IN ANY ROOM
WHEN OTHER OWLS ARE SAYING "WHO"
OWEN CORRECTLY SAYS "WHOM."

Owen (kindly):

Tell me everything, Peter.

Peter:

THE PIGEONS TOLD ME I WAS WEIRD
THEY LAUGHED AT ME AND CALLED ME NAMES
SINCE THAT WAS ALL I EVER HEARD
I BELIEVED THEM

THE PIGEONS MADE ME FEEL ASHAMED
FOR SIMPLY BEING WHO I AM
THEY SAID I NEVER COULD BELONG
AND I BELIEVED THEM

IT'S POIS'NOUS
THE WAY THEY MADE ME FEEL INSIDE
AND WORSE STILL
BECAUSE IT WASN'T JUSTIFIED

A PIGEON HEART IS VERY SMALL
AND PIGEON MINDS LASH OUT WITH PAIN
A PIGEON VOICE DROWNS OUT THE TRUTH
AND I BELIEVED THEM.

Owen (with great compassion):

GLAD YOU MADE IT HERE, MY BOY
FAR TOO MANY NEVER DO
WE EMBRACE THE GIFT YOU ARE
AND SHINE IT BACK TO YOU

I CAN FEEL YOUR WOUNDED HEART
I CAN SEE YOUR BATTERED PRIDE
TIME TO MAKE A BRAND NEW START
AND SET YOUR DOUBTS ASIDE

SO NOW, WITHOUT THOSE PIGEONS CALLING OUT EACH IMPERFECTION
COME STAND BESIDE THIS PUDDLE
AND TELL ME WHAT YOU SEE AS YOU GAZE AT YOUR REFLECTION.

Peter:

WHO IS THIS BIRD?
UNIQUE AMONG ALL CREATURES
WITH SUCH A STUNNING TAIL
AND OTHER STRIKING FEATURES

NO HINT OF BEIGE OR BROWN
BUT THE BLUEST EVER BREAST
THAT NOBLE FEATHER CROWN
LOOK, HE'S PUFFING OUT HIS CHEST!

IT SEEMS AS IF HE'S PROUD
THIS FASCINATING GENT
I SEE THIS HANDSOME BIRD
AND WONDER WHERE THE OLD ME
(THE VERSION THAT THEY SOLD ME)
WENT.

09. WITH LOVE

Chorus:

WITH LOVE FOR YOU WHO STOOD TO BLOCK MY PATH
FOR FORCING ME TO CLIMB ANOTHER WAY
AND TEACHING ME I'M STRONGER THAN I KNEW
I REMEMBER THIS WITH LOVE FOR YOU

WITH LOVE FOR ALL THE STRANGERS I HAVE PASSED
FOR, IF I LOOKED, I SAW A GLIMPSE OF LIGHT
REMINDED THAT IT ALSO BURNS IN ME
I REMEMBER YOU AS FAMILY

WITH LOVE FOR EVERY SOUL THAT I HAVE MET
FOR BY EACH SMALL CONNECTION WE'RE FOREVER CHANGED
AND IN OUR COMMONALITY IS FAITH RENEWED

I REMEMBER THIS WITH PUREST LOVE
AND GRATITUDE.

10. FINALE

Owen:

PETER MADE A LOT MORE FRIENDS

Peter:

BIRDS OF EVERY COLOR SHAPE AND SIZE!

Sara:

HENRY SHOOK THOSE PESKY CROWS

Henry:

IF I IGNORE THEM, THEY DON'T TERRORIZE

Chorus:

THIS IS WHERE OUR TELLING ENDS
BUT ON THE STORY GOES

Peter:

ALL THE THINGS I'VE YET TO LEARN

Chorus:

WELCOME TO A BIGGER WORLD!

Henry:

ALL THE WAYS IN WHICH I GREW

Chorus:

WELCOME TO A BROADER VIEW!

All:

GOOD TO WATCH THE PAGES TURN
AND CHAPTERS START ANEW

Peter & Sara:

IN WITNESSING THE WORLD,

Peter, Sara, Owen & Henry

SO DIVERSE AND SO DYNAMIC
THE SCOPE WILL OPEN WIDER
UNTIL THE SMALL AND DARK CAN

All:

BECOME THE PANORAMIC...

[The number expands. Lights brighten, and if there's a curtain, it opens wider.
An array of other brilliantly-colored birds floods the stage and they sing along.]

All:

OH THE WONDERS THAT WE ARE!
OH THE GIFTS WE HAVE TO SHARE!
VARIED BEATS THE SAME BY FAR

NO MATTER WHO OR WHERE

Peter, Sara, Owen & Henry:

TIME WILL HEAL A WOUNDED HEART...

Chorus:

TIME WILL HEAL YOUR HEART

Peter, Sara, Owen & Henry:

HEART CAN MEND A BATTERED PRIDE...

Chorus:

HEART CAN MEND YOUR PRIDE

All:

PRIDE CAN MAKE US LIVING ART
WITH COLORS AMPLIFIED

AND WHEN THE INNER BLAZE DWINDLES DOWN INTO AN EMBER
TO WALK A LITTLE TALLER
THERE'S ONE ESSENTIAL PHRASE IT'S IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER:

Peter (To audience):

I am extr'ordinary! Say it with me: I am extr'ordinary!
One more time: I am extr'ordinary!

All:

SOME WILL TRY TO TELL YOU
DIFF'RENT ISN'T SPECIAL
BUT THEY CAN ONLY SELL YOU
IF YOU AGREE
LISTEN TO ME AND

[For the first time, Peter fully unfurls his magnificent tail.]

PROUDLY STRUT YOUR YOU-EST YOU
LET YOUR RAINBOW BEAM ON THROUGH

Peter:

THAT'S THE PEACOCK THING TO DO
IT'S...

All:

EXTR'ORDINARY!
WE'RE EXTR'ORDINARY!
LIVE EXTR'ORDINARY AND YOU'LL SEE
JUST HOW (spoken) "Fabulous!"
EXTR'ORDINARY CAN BE!

See ya later, kids. We gotta fly!