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Trans Scripts

Paul Lucas Productions in association with Gail Winar and Pleasance

Review by Keith McKenna



People don't get a choice about the gender they are assigned as children and this may not fit with the way they see themselves: the gender with which they identify. This is central to Paul Lucas's important play *Trans Scripts*.

Paul Lucas has drawn on interviews with people who have identified as transgender women to create part one of *Trans Scripts*. It takes the form of a series of monologues organised around themes such as the earliest awareness of difference, the reactions of others to their decision to question the assigned gender and the way they later decided to live their lives.

What emerges from these stories is a complicated picture of what it means to be transgender. Some things are common. There is the discomfort with the way they have been defined. As one comments, there was a "feeling that I am in the wrong body", a sense of leading "a parallel life in my head".

The characters speak about being bullied. Some were recommended for mental health treatment, including in one case the threat of ECT.

They do however differ in their attitude to aspects of what might be considered gender identity. As one of the characters Eden points out, it is not necessarily about what is worn. "I aint happy with my genitals, but I am happy with my jeans".

Gender is also distinct from sexual orientation. One trans woman explains that she has a wonderful relationship with her wife.

The characters in the play have all taken steps to do something about their situation from hormone treatment to in some cases surgery. Not all of it works out. We hear about one woman whose surgery goes horribly wrong.

These characters all speak about the importance of their gender being accepted and some want that identity officially recognised. One of the characters reminds us that the great civil rights protest of the 1969 New York Stonewall riots was triggered by trans people fighting back against corrupt police brutality.

There is still a long way to go before trans people are granted the same civil rights as the non trans (cis). This thoughtful, well-performed play can help in that necessary process of change.