

# AN INTRODUCTORY NOTE

## from **Tiny Cooper:**

*Hold Me Closer* is meant to be true. (Except for the part where people keep bursting into song—that's only true sometimes.) No names have been changed, except if the person got really annoyed or mad that I was writing about him and asked me to change it. That said, certain ex-boyfriends did not get to decide whether or not their names would be used. If they have a problem with that, they should have never dumped me in the first place.

Like myself, this musical is meant to be loud and spectacular, although there are also some quiet moments. People who don't understand musical theater (i.e., most of my family, and a good portion of the greater Chicago area) tend to think of it as being unrealistic. I disagree. Because what is life if not a series of loud and quiet moments shuffled together with some music thrown in? My point being: Before you put on any production of *Hold Me Closer*, whether it's in your high school auditorium or on Broadway, it's important to realize that the truth is sometimes quiet . . . and other times, it's loud and spectacular. You don't always get to choose which form it takes.

But I get ahead of myself. It's best to think of this as a one-man show that happens to have lots of other people in it. I know it's not going to be physically possible for me to star in every production—although please ask me first when you start the casting process. The musical has already changed slightly since its first epic production.

## ACT I, SCENE 1

*It's a dark stage, and at first all you hear are murmurs, a heartbeat, and heavy breathing. Like, serious Lamaze. Then we see, in the middle of the stage, a large piece of paper showing two bare, spread legs, discreetly covered by a hospital sheet. The heartbeat gets louder. The breathing gets heavier and more frantic, like a dinosaur is sitting on Santa and tickling him at the same time. Finally, as it all crescendos, **TINY COOPER** comes into the world, crashing through the piece of paper and entering spectacularly onto the stage.*

*We are not going for realism here. He should not be naked and covered with amniotic fluid. That's gross. He should not be wearing a diaper. He's not into that. Instead, the person who emerges should be the large, stylish Tiny Cooper that you will see for the next two acts. To delineate him from Tiny at other ages, you should have him wearing a button that says AGE: 0.*

*Most babies come into the world crying or gasping or snorting.*

*Not Tiny Cooper.*

*He comes into the world singing.*

*Cue: Opening chords of "I WAS BORN THIS WAY." This is a big, lively, belty number—because, let's face it, if Elphaba got to sing "Defying Gravity" at the start of Wicked, she'd be much, much happier throughout the entire show. Tiny has just fallen into the world—some would say he was pushed—and*

*already he has a sense of who he is and what he's going to do. The music and the production value must reflect that. Sparkles, people. Lots of sparkles. Do not get stingy with the sparkles. The reason drag queens love them so much is that you can get them for cheap.*

**TINY:**

Hello, my name is Tiny Cooper . . . what's yours?  
I've just been born and, man, it feels good!

*Cue music.*

**["I WAS BORN THIS WAY"]**

**TINY:**

I was born this way,  
big-boned and happily gay.  
I was born this way,  
right here in the U.S. of A.

It's pointless for you to try  
to pinpoint how I became  
so G-A-Y.  
From my very first swish inflection,  
the rainbow curved in my direction.

I've got brown hair,  
big hips,

and green, green eyes.  
And when I grow up  
I'm gonna make out  
with guys, guys, guys!

Why try to hide it?  
What good would that do?  
I was born this way  
and if you don't like it  
that says enough about you.

If you find it odd,  
take it up with God.  
Because who else do you say  
could make me shine this way?

All God's children wear traveling shoes  
whether you've got flat feet  
or twinkle toes.  
I'm going to dance right into this life  
and keep dancing  
as it goes.

I was born this way,  
big-boned and happily gay.  
I was born this way,  
right here in the U.S. of A.

It's pointless for you to try  
to pinpoint how I became  
so G-A-Y.

From my very first swish inflection,  
the rainbow curved in my direction.

I've got genes that fit me well  
and a spirit all my own  
I was born this way—  
The rest is a great unknown!

*Really belting now.*

I.  
was.  
born.  
this.  
way.

And I love.  
the way.  
I.  
was.  
born.

The rest  
is a great unknown.  
But I'm ready,  
oh yes, I'm ready  
to find my own!

*If anyone is going to object to this musical, they will have left the theater at this point. Which is fine. That means for the rest of the*

*time, you'll have a crowd that really gets it.*

*Tiny Cooper steps over to the side of the stage, confiding in the audience. The stage clears. The spotlight is on him. (You will need a very big spotlight.)*

*A note on the spotlight: It should be very clear from the beginning that this is Tiny's special place. I know plenty of people—like my best friend, Will, and my most recent ex (also named Will; long story)—who want to stay as far away from the spotlight as possible. But there are those of us who draw our power from those electric moments when everyone is watching, everyone is listening, and there is the most perfect silence you can imagine, the entire room waiting to hear whatever you will say next. Especially for those of us who ordinarily feel ignored, a spotlight is a circle of magic, with the strength to draw us from the darkness of our everyday lives.*

*The thing about a spotlight is that you have to step into it. You have to get onto that stage. I haven't been ready for a lot of things, but from early on, I was ready for this.*

### **TINY:**

I can't remember a time when I wasn't gay, although there were definitely times I realized it more than others. And I can't remember a time I wasn't huge—which pretty much erased hiding as an option. This was my normal—big and gay. I would have never thought there was anything

unusual about it. Except that I didn't live alone on a desert island. [*Misspelling intentional!*] No, there had to be other people around. And the reaction I got from some of them made me self-conscious.

You don't think babies can hear you. But you're wrong. They can hear you.

*The spotlight returns to the center of the stage. **TINY'S MOM** is wheeling a rather large, somewhat garish pink baby carriage. **TINY'S DAD** is walking beside her. The **CROWD** is made up of neighbors, all of them nosy, many of them judgmental. As they sing "OH! WHAT A BIG GAY BABY!" you should get a sense that they are both intrigued and disturbed by having such a big gay baby in their midst. As for Mom and Dad—they are alright with having a big gay baby, but they're tired, because having a big gay baby takes a lot of work. Not just because he wants to dance all night and demands milk shakes from his mother pretty much every hour, but because of the endless questions from neighbors and the "guidance" of family members who seem to think Mom and Dad have control over how big or how gay their big gay baby is.*

*Mom and Dad can no more make me straight than they can make me short. There's this thing called biology, and it's calling the shots. Mom and Dad realize this. Others do not.*

*The tune here is an old-fashioned town-crowd melody—kind of like how the people from the town in *The Music Man* might sound if Harold Hill had brought an infant homosexual to town instead of wind instruments.*

**["OH! WHAT A BIG GAY BABY!"]**

**CROWD:**

Oh! What a Big Gay Baby!  
He must weigh twenty pounds.  
Oh! What a Big Gay Baby!  
Why is he making those sounds?

**TINY:**

*(makes baby disco sounds, sort of like a gay dance club has opened on Sesame Street)*

**CROWD:**

Oh! What a Big Gay Baby!  
Feeding him must be such work!  
Oh! What a Big Gay Baby!  
He only falls asleep to Björk!

**MOM and DAD:**

*Possibly maybe . . .*  
*Possibly maybe . . .*

**CROWD:**

He prefers hot male nurses  
and cries at ugly purses.  
Has a booty and knows to shake it.  
Has a pacifier and loves to take it.



Oh! What a Big Gay Baby!  
Bedazzle the diapers and order them large!  
Oh! What a Big Gay Baby!  
Pimp his crib the size of a barge!

**MOM and DAD:**

Look at this Big Gay Baby of ours—  
not something you read about in Dr. Spock.  
Look at our Big Gay Baby—  
not what we were expecting when we were  
expecting.  
Hello, dear Big Gay Baby,  
you might have to run before you can walk.

**CROWD:**

Oh! What a Big Gay Baby!  
We're not really sure how we feel.

**MEN IN CROWD:**

Be a man, boy! Be a man!

**WOMEN IN CROWD:**

That's our plan, boy! That's our plan!

**CROWD:**

Oh! What a Big Gay Baby!  
Already the size of a giant T. rex.  
Oh! What a Big Gay Baby!  
So unimpressed by the opposite sex.