100s of Black Gay and Bi Men Helped Create This Theater Piece [VIDEOS]

"As Much As I Can" returns with a new format but the same powerful messages.

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Black gay and bisexual men return to the spotlight, literally, for a new production of As Much As I Can. The HIV-themed show will run September 12 through 16 at Joe's Pub in New York City.

Created by and for Black gay men as part of ViiV Healthcare's "Accelerate!" initiative, the original version was based on hundreds of stories of real men. The resulting show was an immersive experience—meaning the audience followed the actors through different rooms and scenarios, including a church, a bar and a doctor's office. It first ran in January 2017 in Baltimore and Jackson, Mississippi, before it headed to Harlem, New York, last year. (To read POZ articles about those two productions, click here and here.) Three actors in the new production promote the show and their work in short video clips.

The play tackles the themes of stigma, love, community and religion in the Black gay community.

"We stand on the backs of so many people who died and came before us," notes actor Dimitri Moise,who is HIV positive, in a video promoting the show (you can watch the clip at the top of this article and read a profile on him in Plus magazine). "But we now live in a time where I can take one pill a day. It's different now, and we need to eradicate stigma. We need to treat people with HIV with respect and love and dignity because that's what we deserve."

Although the play's latest incarnation takes a slightly different format because Joe's Pub is a more traditional theater venue, with a stage and seats, As Much As I Can retains its immediacy. Playwright Sarah Hall tells BroadwayWorld.com, "The show is designed so that you forget it is a fiction. We want you to feel so much a part of it that it becomes impossible to separate yourself in the way we do when we observe narratives. That could only work if it was a broadly resonant story and if we gave each audience member a role to play."

The show is produced by Harley & Company and directed by James Andrew Walsh. Showtimes are 7 p.m. and 9:30 p.m., September 12 through 16 at Joe's Pub (425 Lafayette Street) in New York City. Tickets are $25, and there is an additional two-drink or $12 food minimum. You can order

tickets here and learn more about the show on amaicny.com.

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