

ALL AT ONCE!

Where The Noise Becomes Music

Book, Music & Lyrics by Richard Ehrlich

Based on GoYou! Focus Forward | Full-Length Musical | Two Acts | Runtime: 2h20–2h30

LOGLINE

A seventeen-year-old girl with ADHD discovers that the world's offer of a quieter, more manageable life is really an offer to disappear slowly — and chooses, at great cost, to stay herself.

SYNOPSIS

JULES CHEN is seventeen, brilliant, and exhausting to be around. She catalogs every sound, notices every pattern, and cannot stop her brain from running in seventeen directions at once. When she fails yet another chemistry test despite understanding the material perfectly, her teacher hands her a card for a support group.

There she meets SAM, a guidance counselor who turned his own ADHD into a vocation; MAYA, a single mother raising a daughter with the same wiring; and MARCUS, a college student who appears to have figured everything out. Jules also notices that Derek — her lab partner, her almost-boyfriend — is visibly more relaxed when she's smaller. She starts to wonder what it would take to make everyone's life easier.

She tries compliance for one week. It works. Her parents exhale. Derek holds her hand. Her teacher praises her. And in the middle of a perfectly good evening, Jules glimpses her future self at a dinner table forty years from now — composed, successful, someone's idea of fine. Her eyes drift slightly off. She doesn't notice. Nobody at the table thinks this is sad.

Jules makes a choice. She walks away from the easy path — not dramatically, but quietly, at dawn, alone. What follows is the cost of that choice: grades that slip, parents who panic, Derek who grows distant. A pressure canon of voices collapses around her. She types a text to Derek offering to go back to how things were. She deletes it. She puts the phone face-down on the bed.

In Act II, Marcus's arc deepens into the show's dark mirror. His two songs — “Somewhere Along the Way” and “I Did Everything Right” — reveal a young man who succeeded at every accommodation the system asked for and arrived somewhere empty. He tells Jules: “Go do whatever you're going to do. While you still remember what it sounds like in there. Before you learn not to miss it.”

At the district school board hearing, Jules faces organized opposition from parents who believe accommodation is unfair to their children. She loses the room mid-speech and reclaims it not by being louder, but by waiting — two seconds of silence that the room feels as control. The pilot

program passes 4-3. Minutes later, a scholarship letter arrives: she got in on the strength of work that looks exactly like her.

The show ends with the company gathered around Jules — her parents beginning (not resolved), Derek’s hand in hers (still learning), Marcus at the edge of the circle (not yet inside it). Underneath the final image, the “Almost Works” melody plays very softly, transformed into something resolved and real. Jules speaks her last line quietly, to herself:

“I’m still in the room.”

THEMES

- The cost of compliance — what neurodivergent people trade to pass for manageable
- Identity under pressure — the seduction of becoming someone easier to love
- What it means to arrive at yourself in time
- Systemic accommodation vs. the human behind the policy
- Chosen family and the people who love you without a preference for which version shows up

AUDIENCE & MARKET

Young adult and adult audiences. Strong appeal to the neurodiversity community and their families. Timely subject matter for educational and corporate wellness markets. Distinct commercial potential for schools, universities, and healthcare organizations seeking accessible arts programming.