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Exploring the gray area between genders



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Written by Gregg Shapiro, Staff writer
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Boston-based drag king performance troupe All the Kings Men is the subject of "Play in the Gray," a documentary by filmmaker Kaitin Meelia. The title refers to the "gray zone" of gender occupied by most of the six-member group.

All The Kings Men has a straightforward, so to speak, mission to make people "think in a fun and open way" and to show "the world a different view." ATKM's shows feature skits, lip synching, choreography and a wide variety of genders and characters.

Constantly reinventing themselves, the six women consider ATKM more than a pastime. They have sacrificed aspects of their lives to pursue its success.

More than just a chronicle of performances, "Play in the Gray" is a revealing and intimate portrait of the group's members. Julee Antonellis talks about having had "moments" when she was "girlie" and how much she loves to make people laugh. The interview with her parents about Julee's coming out is especially moving.

Jill, at ease with not identifying with one gender, is well-spoken on the subject of being "in the gray." Jill is married to troupe member Karin Webb, who shares her struggles with members of her fundamentalist Christian family.

Katie Allen, who is comfortable when mistaken for a boy, but less comfortable in the gray zone, says she feels like a drag queen when she puts on make-up, a wig and a dress with cleavage.

Ultimately, like many in the LGBT community, these women have created their own families, with spouses, friends and fellow performers.

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