

I Don't Do Club Dates

A new musical

Book and lyrics by Isidore Elias
Music by Randy Klein



Contact

Isidore Elias
214 Sterling Place, #203
Brooklyn, NY 11238
(718) 636-5148

Randy Klein
498 West End Avenue, #1B
New York, NY 10024
(212) 580-9065

PLACE: Brooklyn, Queens, Long Island

TIME: 1971

CHARACTERS:

ARTIE BONAY: (32) A band leader who specializes in weddings and bar mitvahs. Hates doing club dates. Been doing them for fifteen years. Wants to be a pop star like Frankie Vali. Works for his father. *Pop tenor.*

RED BONANO: (60 years old) Artie's father. Founder and leader of Red Bonano Orchestras. Former bandleader, now runs the office. Would like to retire. Has an ailing heart, a drinking problem, and a cigarette habit. *Character baritone.*

MAY MARCH: (40) Red's secretary. Aspiring club date singer. Accepted her job several years ago on the promise that she'd one day be permitted to sing. Still waiting. *Legit soprano.*

FRANCES MANDELBAUM: (55) Owner of the Abracadabra Manor, an extravagant new catering hall. Was Red's lover in their youth, but jilted him in favor of his rival, Morty Mann (from whom she is now divorced). She and Red have not seen each other since. *Alto.*

BRUNO MANDELBAUM: (40) Frances' son and partner. Wants to strike it rich in the catering business. His wedding is to be the first affair catered at the Abracadabra Manor. Sees it as an opportunity to promote the business. *Legit tenor.*

SHEILA BURNS (nee' Bernstein): (29) Bruno's bride. A singer/songwriter making a living as a lounge singer. Sees the wedding as an opportunity to showcase her material. *High alto.*

MORTY MANN: (60) Founder and leader of Morty Mann and his Men of Music, the biggest club date office in the business. Long-time rival of Red. Recently divorced from Frances. *Character baritone.*

DREW POUPOPOULOS: (32) Freelance guitarist who occasionally plays with Artie's band. Leader of The Gigolos, a rock group Artie once fronted in his spare time. Convinced the group will soon get a recording contract. Vigorously despises club dates. *Tenor.*

BUDDY FRIEDMAN: (40) The drummer in Artie's set band. A veteran club date musician. "Really" a jazzier. *Bass.*

LENNY BERLIN: (35) The keyboard player in Artie's set band. Veteran club date musician. "Really" a classical pianist. *Tenor.*

CHORUS: Assorted party guests, clients, waiters, waitresses, etc. *2 tenors, 2 sopranos.*

ORCHESTRA: Onstage for the entire performance. **BUDDY, LENNY** and **DREW** are actual members. Others assist in **CHORUS** roles.

Act I, Scene 1 (Prolog)

Henry's of Little Neck, a second-rate catering hall in Queens.

Towards the end of the Overture, lights rise over a small bandstand decorated with red balloons. The MUSICIANS have obviously had a long night. Nearby, GUESTS dance. Prominent among them are FRANCES and BRUNO. SHEILA, a moody young woman, is the only person seated at a table.

The band segues into song. ARTIE BONAY, the front man, steps forward.

ARTIE

IT'S TIME TO CALL IT A NIGHT
ALTHOUGH WE WISH WE COULD STAY,
IF WE DON'T CALL IT A NIGHT RIGHT NOW
WE'LL SOON HAVE NOTHING LEFT TO PLAY.

WE HAD A WONDERFUL TIME.
HEY - WASN'T THE PARTY COMPLETE?
WE TALKED AND LAUGHED AND SANG AND DANCED,
WE ALL GOT PLENTY TO EAT.
MMMM!

IT'S TIME TO STRAIGHTEN THAT TIE.
IT'S TIME TO PUT ON THOSE SHOES.
IF WE DON'T CALL IT A NIGHT RIGHT NOW,
WE'RE GONNA RUN OUT OF BOOZE.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,
YOUR BELOVED HOSTS,
MR. AND MRS. MIKE AND LEE LEVINE
WISH TO THANK YOU FOR SHARING
THE JOY ON THIS NIGHT OF THEIR
BENJAMIN'S SWEET SIXTEEN...
I MEAN BAR-MITZVAH.

WE HAD A GREAT TIME.
YOU'VE BEEN A GREAT CROWD -
GIVE YOURSELVES A HAND!
YOU'VE BEEN DANCING TO THE MUSIC
OF THE RED BONANO ORCHESTRA,
AND ON BEHALF OF THE BAND,
THANKS FROM THE BOTTOM OF OUR HEARTS.
YOU'VE MADE THE NIGHT A BIG SUCCESS.
UNTIL WE MEET AGAIN, GOOD NIGHT,
PLEASE DRIVE HOME SAFELY, AND GOD BLESS.

(ARTIE, cont'd.)

IT'S TIME TO GO GET THE CAR.
DON'T STIFF THE PARKING VALET.
MAKE SURE THAT ENVELOPE GETS TO BENJAMIN
AS YOU GO ON YOUR WAY.

IT'S TIME TO CALL IT A NIGHT,
AND THOUGH WE WISH WE COULD STAY,
IF WE DON'T CALL IT A NIGHT RIGHT NOW,
CALL IT A NIGHT RIGHT NOW,
IF WE DON'T CALL IT A NIGHT,
WE'LL SOON BE CALLING IT A DAY.

*He finishes with a clarinet flourish. Bright lights. The
MUSICIANS take out instrument cases and pack hastily.*

Nighty-night!

ARTIE

*He switches off the microphone with a loud pop. FRANCES,
BRUNO and SHEILA join him. BRUNO has his arms around
both women.*

You were sensational!

FRANCES

(Still "on")
I had your help.

ARTIE

You're a doll.

FRANCES

Tell the boss about it. Maybe he'll give me a raise.

ARTIE

Where is Red?

FRANCES

You know Red?

ARTIE

We were kids. It's amazing - you're just like him.

FRANCES

He's my father.

ARTIE

I knew it! **FRANCES**

You knew it? **ARTIE**

(To BRUNO)
Did I know it? **FRANCES**

She knew it. **BRUNO**

I knew it! You're your father when he was young. **FRANCES**

I also do a terrific impersonation of myself. **ARTIE**

Is Daddy doing well? **FRANCES**

Well... **ARTIE**

With a son like you to run things, he's got nothing to worry about. **FRANCES**

I'm just a front man. **ARTIE**

Just! **FRANCES**

Dad's the boss. **ARTIE**

Listen to me, I meet band leaders every day, but you... **FRANCES**

You're in the business? **ARTIE**

Catering. *(Producing business card)* Frances Mandelbaum. **FRANCES**

A pleasure. **ARTIE**

Bruno, my son... **FRANCES**

And partner.	BRUNO
Such a big boy!	ARTIE
And Sheila Bernstein...	FRANCES
Burns.	SHEILA
<i>(Attracted)</i>	ARTIE
Hi!	
My fiancée.	BRUNO
<i>(To SHEILA, grandly)</i>	ARTIE
Mazel tov!	
Let's not overdo it.	SHEILA
It's his job to overdo it, hon.	BRUNO
You do it very well.	SHEILA
<i>(To SHEILA)</i>	ARTIE
You're also a partner?	
A performer, like you.	FRANCES
Not like him. <i>(To ARTIE)</i> I don't do club dates.	SHEILA
<i>(Defensively)</i>	ARTIE
I have another band, but we...	
Don't work.	SHEILA
Not yet.	ARTIE

SHEILA

You're very good at what you do.

BRUNO

Sheila works a room in Hempstead. The Caboose.

ARTIE

That cozy little lounge near the Long Island Railroad?

SHEILA

Let's get the car, Bruno.

FRANCES

Just a moment, dear. *(Pulling ARTIE aside)* I've already booked the band for the kids' wedding, Artie, but I think we could do better.

ARTIE

Who'd you book?

FRANCES

Morty Mann.

ARTIE

The biggest in the business!

FRANCES

The biggest schmuck in the business. Are you available...

ARTIE

Talk to Dad if you want to talk bookings.

FRANCES

How do I get in touch?

ARTIE

Take the number off one of these balloons.

FRANCES

I'll do that. It'll be a hoot to talk to him again after all these years.

ARTIE

(“On”)
It's been a pleasure, Mrs. Mandelbaum. *(To SHEILA)* Have a happy happy hour!

FRANCES

Amazing. You really are just like him.

Exit FRANCES, SHEILA and BRUNO.

ARTIE
JUST LIKE HIM...

BUDDY: Hey , Artie...

ARTIE: THERE IT GOES AGAIN -
JUST LIKE HIM...

BUDDY: Artie...

ARTIE: I DON'T KNOW HER AND I'M
JUST LIKE HIM...

BUDDY: Mr. Bonay!

Yeah?
ARTIE

What do we got next Saturday?
BUDDY

Chateau Baton, eight o'clock, pink shirts.
ARTIE

Queens Boulevard, right? ... Right? ... Hey, Artie... (No answer) Nighty-night
LENNY

Blackout over MUSICIANS.

ARTIE
JUST LIKE HIM.
SHE SAID, "ARTIE, YOU'RE JUST LIKE HIM."
WELL IF I'M REALLY JUST LIKE HIM,
I DON'T LIKE ME.

AND IF I DON'T LIKE ME,
PEOPLE LIKE ME WON'T LIKE ME.
HE'S MY FATHER SO I HAVE TO LOVE THE GUY,
BUT I THINK I'D RATHER DIE
THAN BE JUST...
I AM NOT LIKE HIM!

I WAS MEANT FOR GREATER THINGS.
NOT THESE SECOND-RATER THINGS.
SINGIN' SCHLOCK WHILE THE WAITER SLINGIN' SLOP
AT THE SLOBS
IN A HOLE OF A CATERING HALL.
HELL -

(ARTIE, cont'd.)

ME LIKE HIM?
ME? NO WAY I'M GONNA BE LIKE HIM.
LIVIN' LIFE UP A TREE LIKE HIM -
NO WAY!
I WOULD RATHER WORK FOR FREE...
I AM *NOT LIKE HIM!*

THE FIRST OPPORTUNITY THAT COMES MY WAY
TO SCRAP THIS CRAP FOR SOMETHING THAT'S REAL -
THE FIRST OPPORTUNITY THAT COME WAY WAY,
WHATEVER IT IS, I'LL MAKE THAT DEAL.

*Lighting change. Feel of music becomes post-Doo-wop.
Offstage singers provide background vocals. ARTIE appears to
step into a spotlight.*

ARTIE
WHEN I FIN'LY GET MY BREAK,
I'M GONNA BREAK AWAY.
DO WHAT I WANNA DO.
DO IT FOR PEOPLE WHO
WANT TO BE THERE.

WHEN I GET MY PIECE OF THE CAKE,
I'M GONNA BE LIKE ARTIE BONAY.
I GOTTA BE LIKE ME
CAUSE I DON'T WANNA BE
SELLIN' MY TALENT,
SELLIN' MY TIME,
SELLIN' MY ASS
AND PRETENDING THAT I'M
NOT LIKE HIM.

BACKGROUND VOCALS
DO-WANNA-WANNA-WANNA
DO-WANNA-WANNA-D'-
DO IT!
DO IT!
WANT TO BE THERE.

DO-WANNA-WANNA-WANNA
DO-WANNA-WANNA-D'-
DO-IT
DO-IT

Music/lighting returns to normal.

I AM NOT LIKE HIM.

CAUSE IF I'M JUST LIKE HIM
IF I'M COLLECTING DUST LIKE HIM,
THEN I MUST BE A BUST
JUST LIKE HIM.

Exit ARTIE. Vamp continues as setting changes to Red's Office.

Act I, Scene 2
Red's Office.

MAY MARCH, a secretary, sits at her desk filing her nails. On the wall behind her a framed poster reads "RED BONANO ORCHESTRAS - Con sentimento e con dulciano."

Enter RED BONANO, wearing an overcoat, carrying a briefcase. MAY gets busy with a stack of index cards.

(Pleasantly)
Good morning.

MAY

What are you doin', May?

RED

Filing.

MAY

Filin' what?

RED

(Sarcastically)
Next month's booking.

MAY

(Taking off his coat)
What do I got, wise ass?

RED

(Leafing through message slips)
Buddy Friedman, twice. You forgot his overtime again.

MAY

What else?

RED

Morty Mann.

MAY

That marmeluke.

RED

He'll try back later.

MAY

D'you tell him to drop dead?

RED

MAY

He says he wants to help.

RED

He wants to help himself to my trade. What else?

MAY

Mrs. Dolinko. She knows you charged her sister three hundred less for the same band and she'll never do business with you again.

RED

I don't need her kind of business.

MAY

She has five unmarried daughters.

RED

(Concerned)

Call her back. Apologize...

MAY

Me!

RED

Tell her you made an honest mistake, I'll make it up to her.

MAY

I made the mistake!

RED

Tell her I'll throw in an extra singer.

MAY

(Writing, annoyed)

One extra singer...

RED

A girl singer. They work cheaper.

MAY

Who should I call?

RED

You got the list. See what's available.

MAY

What about me?

RED

(Routinely)

You're not ready.

It's two years, Red!

MAY

You're not ready.

RED

(Whining)
Red!

MAY

What else?

RED

Those were the calls.

MAY

Coffee.

RED

MAY gets up to pour coffee. RED lights a cigarette. The phone rings. MAY answers. MUSIC.

MAY: RED BONANO ORCHESTRAS... ONE MOMENT, PLEASE.
(Covering mouthpiece)
It's Maxie Squadron, Local 802.

RED: *(Sourly)* Great.

He takes the phone. Sweetly

HOW'RE YOU DOIN', MAXIE?
SO-SO.
SURE I CAN -
WHADDAYA WANNA KNOW?

WHAT I THINK OF THE UNION?
MY FAVORITE INSTITUTION.
MY PENSION CONTRIBUTION?
MAY - YOU SENT THE CHECK

MAY: YOU SAID I SHOULDN'T...

RED: SHE SENT THE CHECK.

MAY: Ohh...

RED: ABOUT A WEEK AGO -
WHADDAYA MEAN, FULL DECK?

(RED, cont'd.)

DO ME A FAVOR,
MAKE ME A COPY.
SEND IT OUT TODAY.
I'LL CHECK IT AGAINST MY RECORDS;
IF YOU'RE IN THE RIGHT,
WHATEVER I OWE, I'LL PAY.

Hangs up phone.

Send him a check.

MAY: Another fine?

RED: Goddam extortionists.

Pastel pink lighting comes up over the CHORUS in tropical attire, on an idealized beach. They smile invitingly.

ONE OF THESE DAYS
I'M GONNA BE LIVIN'
IN POMPANO BEACH,
SOMEONE ELSE RUNNIN THE BUSINESS
AND SENDIN MY CHECKS TO THE SHORE.

ONE OF THESE DAYS
I'LL BE BACK IN THE BLACK
WITH THE BEACH IN MY REACH.
ONE OF THESE DAYS
I WON'T HAVE TO FIGHT ANYMORE.

The phone rings. CHORUS disappears.

MAY: RED BONANO ORCHESTRAS... ONE MOMENT, PLEASE.
(Covering receiver) Seymour LaRouche.

RED: Terrific.

He takes the telephone.

HOW'RE YOU DOIN', SEYMOUR?
THE RENT?
MAY, WHAT WAS THE DATE
ON THE PAYMENT THAT WE SENT?
WHAT?

YEAH...YEAH...
SEYMOUR... INHALE.
SHE SENT IT OUT A WEEK AGO -
DONT YOU OPEN YOUR MAIL?

(RED. cont'd.)

DO ME A FAVOR,
HOLD OFF AND SEE
WHAT'S IN YOUR BOX TODAY.
GIVE ME ANOTHER BUZZ --
IF YOU'RE IN THE RIGHT,
WHATEVER IT IS, I'LL...

The other party has hung up. RED puts down the receiver.

Write him a check.

MAY: There isn't enough for the rent and the pension fund.

RED: There isn't enough for the rent *or* the pension fund.

The CHORUS appears, as before.

POMPANO BEACH -
IT'S MORE THAN THE WEATHER.
POMPANO BEACH -
IT'S MORE THAN A CHANGE
IN THE LATITUDE.
POMPANO BEACH -
IT'S MORE THAN THE OCEAN.
IT'S MORE THAN THE SAND AND THE SUN -
POMPANO BEACH IS AN ATTITUDE.

He moves towards the CHORUS.

CAUSE THE DAYS ARE BRIGHT
AND THE NIGHTS ARE BREEZY,
AND A GUY KILLS TIME THERE
TAKIN' IT EASY.
LIVIN' HIS LIFE
JUST LIKE HE OUGHTA
IN A LITTLE CONDOMINIUM
RIGHT ON THE WATER
POMPANO BEACH.
POMPANO (BEACH)...

Phone rings. The CHORUS freezes.

MAY: RED BONANO ORCHESTRAS... ONE MOMENT PLEASE.
(Covering phone) It's Buddy Friedman again about his overtime.

RED: *(Continuing to move toward CHORUS)*
Write him a check.

MAY: But you said there isn't...

RED: Write the goddam check!

RED now stands among the CHORUS members.

I'LL SIT BY THE POOL,
HAVE A DRINK,
GO SWIMMIN',
TAKE A RIDE TO THE MALL,
FLIRT WITH THE WOMEN.

CHORUS GIRLS wink at RED.

CATCH AN EARLY BIRD SPECIAL -
VEAL AND FETTUCINI
AT A SEASIDE CAFE.
"ANOTHER DRY MARTINI!"
POMPANO BEACH.

I'LL GIVE U CIGARETTES,
GET INTO CONDITION,
PLAY A LITTLE GOLF,
MAYBE TAKE UP FISHIN' -
GET ON A BOAT
ANY TIME OF THE YEAR
WITH A BAMBOO POLE
AND AN ICE COLD BEER.

(To CHORUS)

Y'know, I oughta call the airlines right now, go down there, see what's what with the real estate, get Artie to hold the for while I'm gone. And wait'll I tell the kid I'm ready to hand him the whole show! He'll love me for it. May...

MAY

(Who has been filing her nails)

I'm calling, I'm calling - nobody's home...

RED

Never mind that. Get my son. Tell him I want him here first thing tomorrow morning.

MAY

(Writing)

First thing tomorrow...

RED: ONE OF THESE DAYS
I'M GONNA BE LIVIN' IN POMPANO (BEACH)...

Phone rings. MAY answers.

MAY: RED BONANO ORCHESTRAS...
(Covering mouthpiece) It's Morty Mann.

RED: Unbelievable.

MAY: Take it easy, okay?

RED: HOW'RE Y'DOIN', MORTY?

MAY: DONT LET HIM RILE YOU, RED.

RED: ME? FINE...

MAY: THINK WHAT THE DOCTOR SAID.

RED: BUSINESS COULD BE BETTER,
BUT AT LEAST WHAT'S MINE IS MINE.
(Flipping the bird)
I LOVE YOU ALSO...
I UNDERSTAND...
DONT WORRY 'BOUT MY FUTURE, KID,
I ALREADY GOT IT PLANNED...
ARE YOU GONNA TRY TO TELL ME
YOU AIN'T LOOKIN' TO EXPAND...?
MORTY, LISTEN - GET IT STRAIGHT:
I'M NOT GONNA SELL MY BAND!

DO ME A FAVOR...

MAY: CALM DOWN, RED. TAKE A BREATH.

RED: DONT DO ME FAVORS!

MAY: YOU'LL AGGRAVATE YOURSELF TO DEATH.

RED: (Muttering)
DIRTY FILTHY STINKIN' RATE,
TALKIN' TO ME LIKE THAT...

MAY: Red...

RED: I BUST MY COGLIONI FOR WHAT?
THIS BALONEY?

MAY: Red...

RED: FOR JESUS CHRIST ALMIGHTY'S SAKE,
WHEN DO I GET A BREAK?

MAY: Red...

RED: ONE OF THESE DAYS
I'M GONNA BE LIVIN' IN POMPANO (BEACH)...

MAY: ONE OF THESE DAYS
I'LL COME IN HERE AND FIND YOU
STRETCHED OUT ON THE (FLOOR)...

RED: ONE OF THESE DAYS I'LL GET
OUT OF THIS SWAMP AN' KNOW
EVERYTHING'S RIGHT...

MAY: Red...

RED: ONE OF THESE DAYS,
I WON'T HAVE TO FIGHT...

He stops to catch his breath.

I WON'T HAVE TO FIGHT...

He gasps. MAY leads him to his chair.

MAY: YOU DON'T HAVE TO FIGHT.

RED sits. PAUSE

RED: THE NIGHTS ARE BREEZY
AND THE DAYS ARE BRIGHT...
I'LL TAKE IT EASY,
TREAT MYSELF RIGHT...
WON'T HAVE TO FREEZE...
WON'T HAVE TO FIGHT...
DOWN IN...

MAY: Are you gonna be all right, Red?

RED: Huh?

MAY: Are you gonna be...

RED: Fine. I'm fine. Get out of here now...

MAY: Isn't there anything I can...

RED: May...

DO ME A FAVOR -
MAKE ME A DRINK.
DON'T WORRY...
I'M OKAY.

MAY: Are you sure there's nothing I can...

RED: Gimme a minute, kid. Let me be by myself.

MAY exits, hesitantly. The CHORUS gathers around RED.

IT'LL TAKE SOME TIME...
I STILL GOT SOME TIME...

CHORUS: POMPANO BEACH...

RED & CHORUS: POMPANO BEACH...

RED: THERE'S A NYLON-COVERED
ALUMINUM CHAISE
WAITIN' FOR ME
TO START CATCHIN' SOME RAYS.
I'M GONNA MAKE IT TO POMPANO...

CHORUS: POMPANO BEACH.

The phone rings.

RED: ONE OF THESE DAYS.

RED picks up the receiver without putting it to his ear and drops it back into the cradle.

Act I, Scene 3

Another catering hall.

*BUDDY, LENNY and DREW play a lively dance arrangement.
ARTIE and SHEILA share a microphone, enjoying each other.*

MUSICIANS: VA-VA-VA VOOM VA-VOOM
VA-VA-VA VOOM *(etc.)*

ARTIE: BABY YOU'RE A BIG GIRL NOW,
YOU'RE A BLOSSOM THAT'S ABOUT TO BLOOM
MAYBE YOU CAN TELL ME HOW
YOU GOT THAT VA-VA-VOOM.
ARE YOU REALLY LITTLE SUZIE?

BUDDY
WOOOOWWWW!!

LENNY
(Whistles)

DREW
(Spanish kiss)

ARTIE: BABY YOU'RE A BIG GIRL NOW

MUSICIANS: SWEET, SWEET, SWEET SIXTEEN,
SHE'S A NEAT, SWEET, SWEET SIXTEEN *(etc.)*

ARTIE: Ladies and gentlemen, Suzie and her parents Greg and Micki Colonomus tell me that dinner is about to be served across the hall in the beautiful Cotillion Room. You're listening and dancing to the music of the Red Bonano Orchestra -

MUSICIANS: CON SENTIMENTO E CON DULCIANO.

ARTIE: We're going to take a short break now, but when we come back, we'll continue celebrating Suzie's sweet sixteen with the hi-jinx of Zippy the Chimp and music, music, music.

MUSICIANS
SUZIE'S SWEET SIXTEEN
SUZIE'S SWEET SIXTEEN.
SUZIE'S SWEET SIXTEEN.

ARTIE
SUZIE'S SO FINE.
I WISH SHE WAS MINE,
SO KEEP ME IN LINE.

ALL: SUZIE IS THE GIRL FOR YOU.

ARTIE

(To MUSICIANS)

Let's set up the ballroom for the limbo competition before we break.

MUSICIANS move their equipment. DREW sits on his amplifier and broods.

Wake up, Drew. The sooner we move the sooner we eat.

I don't have an appetite.

DREW

Your stomach?

ARTIE

This puke. Even the rock is like Lawrence Welk.

DREW

Show some respect for the dead. *(To ARTIE)* Where's Friday?

BUDDY

Haberdashery convention. Flushing Holiday Inn. Eight o'clock.

ARTIE

White shirts?

LENNY

Blue. *(To DREW)* Wanna work?

ARTIE

No thanks.

DREW

I thought you need the bread.

ARTIE

I do.

DREW

So take the gig, it's a nice taste, these haberdashers always go overtime.

ARTIE

(Haughty)
My weekend's booked.

DREW

You can't be in club dates if you're busy weekends.

ARTIE

I don't want be *in* club dates.

DREW

What's wrong with club dates?

BUDDY

At least it's not a day job.

LENNY

DREW

You don't want to either. You're too good for this crap.

LENNY

What does he want?

DREW

To spend more time with *my* band.

ARTIE

I have to pay rent.

DREW

You do music you like with the Gigolos.

ARTIE

In rehearsal. *(To BUDDY and LENNY)* Two nights a week, we haven't had a legit gig.

MUSICIANS laugh.

DREW

We played the Circus last week.

BUDDY

You played, but were you paid?

DREW

Remember the guy who said he was a record executive?

ARTIE

Guy that shorted your amp with his daiquiri?

DREW

Turns out he's for real. They want us to make a demo recording.

ARTIE

They?

DREW

The label. They booked us a studio Friday.

ARTIE

They booked the studio?

DREW

If the demo's good we get a record and a tour.

Why didn't you call!

ARTIE

Couldn't reach you.

DREW

That birthday luncheon.

BUDDY

Damn! Why does it have to be Friday?

ARTIE

What's the problem?

DREW

The haberdashers are loyal clients.

ARTIE

Fuck the haberdashers, this is the shit! (To BAND) Can you believe he's ready to pass up a deal for the sake of a club date?

DREW

A demo's not a deal

ARTIE

A shot at a deal! We've been dreaming of this for years, Artie. How can you even think of putting it off?

DREW

I'll try to get out of it.

ARTIE

Try!

DREW

I'll do what I can. (Generally) Let's move.

ARTIE

Right. We don't want to be late for the limbo competition.

DREW

Exit DREW with guitar and amp. The OTHERS continue packing.

LENNY

Your old man'll have a heart attack if you blow off his haberdasher gig.

ARTIE

How often do opportunities like this come up?

BUDDY

How often do they come off?

ARTIE

This is the shit I'm supposed to be doing.

LENNY

Even if it does come off, how long do you think it'll be before you see any money?

ARTIE

If you're born with a gift you owe it to yourself to make the most of it.

BUDDY

You owe it to yourself to make the most *with* it.

SETTLE FOR WHAT YOU GET
AND YOU'LL NEVER BE DISAPPOINTED.
SETTLE FOR WHAT YOU GET
AND YOU'LL ALWAYS BE CONTENT.
WHAT'S THE USE OF CRYING
THAT YOU HAVEN'T EVEN STARTED YET
WHEN YOU JUST AS EASILY CAN SIT BACK
AND SETTLE FOR WHAT YOU GET?

LENNY: SETTLE FOR WHAT YOU GET
AND YOU'LL NEVER HAVE TO LOOK AT OPTIONS.
SETTLE FOR WHAT YOU GET
AND DECISIONS'LL BE A BREEZE.
WHY SHOULD YOU MAKE CHOICES
YOU'RE LIKELY TO REGRET
WHEN YOU JUST AS EASILY CAN SIT BACK
AND SETTLE FOR WHAT YOU GET?

BUDDY/LENNY: LIFE ISN'T LONG ENOUGH TO BE
TOLERATIN' DELAY.
YOU'RE A JERK IF YOU SHIRK
THE WORK AND THE
MONEY THAT COMES YOUR WAY.
WHAT'S THE POINT OF WAITIN' FOR
THAT OLD PROVERBIAL BREAK?
IF YOU'RE A MAN,
TAKE WHAT YOU CAN
WHILE THERE'S STILL SOMETHIN'
LEFT OUT THERE TO TAKE.

ARTIE: You're right. There is still somethin' left out there for me. And I'm
not going to let it get away.

BUDDY/LENNY: SETTLE FOR WHAT YOU GET
BUDDY: AND YOU'LL NEVER HAVE NO SURPRISES.
BUDDY/LENNY: SETTLE FOR WHAT YOU GET
LENNY: AND YOU'LL ALWAYS KNOW THE SCORE.
BUDDY: WHAT'S THE POINT OF PINING?
THE FUTURE AIN'T A THREAT ANYMORE.
LENNY: WHY GAMBLE IF YOU DON'T HAVE TO BET?
BUDDY: WHY SCRAMBLE IF YOU DON'T HAVE TO SWEAT?
BUDDY/LENNY: WHO CARES ABOUT WHERE YOUR HEART IS SET
IF YOUR HEART IS ALWAYS SORE?
WHEN YOU SETTLE FOR WHAT YOU GET,

BUDDY: YOU NEVER HAVE TO PICK,
LENNY: AND YOU DON'T HAVE TO FRET,
BUDDY/LENNY: CAUSE WHEN YOU SETTLE FOR WHAT YOU GET...

ARTIE: YOU GET WHAT YOU SETTLE FOR.

BUDDY/LENNY: RIGHT!

ALL: WHEN YOU SETTLE FOR WHAT YOU GET,
YOU GET WHAT YOU SETTLE FOR.

Act I, Scene 4

The Abracadabra Manor.

A large ballroom in the process of being renovated. All furnishings are covered except for the littered, rickety card table. FRANCES, BRUNO, and MORTY MANN are seated around.

SHEILA sits at a piano several feet away, its cover pulled back just enough to expose the keyboard and rack, upon which are a notebook and pencil. She sullenly plunks out a one-phrase melody as the others speak. Until noted, MORTY never looks at BRUNO.

MORTY

I book a million weddin's a month, Frances, I know what I'm sayin'. You wanna make it a theme party, make it somethin' people can enjoy.

BRUNO

(Trying to get MORTY's attention)

But Dad - a picnic in Bavaria! What's more enjoyable than a...

MORTY

People want to be happy when they go to a party.

BRUNO

Think of Heidi, The Sound of Music, the merry villager sequences in Frankenstein.

MORTY

How can they be happy if they gotta act like a bunch of Bavarians?

BRUNO

What do you think, Sheila?

SHEILA

Shh!

FRANCES

(To BRUNO, tenderly)

We'll go Bavarian, dear. *(To MORTY, sternly)* What else?

MORTY

Why four hundred couples?

BRUNO

The extra guests are prospective clients.

MORTY

You're jammin up the floor!

BRUNO

From the ad in the Voice. I expect to generate a lot business with this...

MORTY

You expect the people to dance if you're jammin up the floor?

BRUNO

Is four hundred couples too much, Sheila?

SHEILA

Shh!

FRANCES

We'll invite as many people as you want, dear. What else?

MORTY

What kind of musicians am I supposed to get you? Tubas? Hurdy-gurdies? Glockenspiels?

FRANCES

(To BRUNO)

I thought you told him.

MORTY

(Looking at BRUNO for the first time)

Told me what?

BRUNO

(Frightened)

Ah, ah, ah...

FRANCES

(To MORTY)

We're not using your band.

MORTY

Hah?

FRANCES

If it was up to me, you wouldn't even be a guest.

MORTY

Who you usin'?

FRANCES

Artie Bonay.

MORTY

Bonano's kid?

FRANCES

He's a doll.

MORTY

You're gonna ditch me for a small-time putz like Red?

FRANCES

I ditched him for a big-time putz like you, didn't I?

BRUNO

Daddy's got a point, Mom. These red bananas are small potatoes. We don't know if they can handle a big production.

MORTY

Listen to him, Frances.

BRUNO

We don't know if they can sustain an elegant atmosphere.

MORTY

Tottele's makin sense.

BRUNO

We don't even know if we can get them on such short notice.

FRANCES

Red's an old friend. I'll convince him.

MORTY

How? Y'know you're not a kid anymore...

FRANCES

I'll offer him the house.

MORTY

The house!

FRANCES

First shot at everything we book.

MORTY

Are you nuts? Bonano don't know what's what with music today.

FRANCES

Artie does. *(To BRUNO)* Doesn't he?

BRUNO

Ah... *(Frightened)*

Well?

MORTY

(To SHEILA)
What do you think, hon?

BRUNO

Leave me out of this.

SHEILA

FRANCES
A very helpful suggestion. We'll go with Red. *(Standing)* Anything else, Morty? I have work to do.

MORTY
Don't get fresh! Remember who's payin' for this orgy.

FRANCES
Come. We'll leave these two lovebirds to bill and coo.

Exit FRANCES and MORTY. SHEILA goes on with her plunking and jotting.

BRUNO
It's your wedding too, Sheila. Why can't you be more involved?

SHEILA
I'm busy.

BRUNO
With those silly little ditties.

SHEILA
Watch it, Bruno...

BRUNO
(Whining)
Hon...

SHEILA
You're gonna get popped.

BRUNO
This is business! Our future. I'm going to put the Abracadabra Manor on the map with this affair. Why can't you get behind me on this?

SHEILA
Because you're rubbing me the wrong way!

(SHEILA, cont'd.)

She gasps delightedly: her last sentence fits the phrase she has been playing.

(Singing and fingering melody)

YOU'RE RUBBING ME THE WRONG WAY...

She writes excitedly as BRUNO speaks.

BRUNO

You used to like my ideas. Even when they were silly.

SHEILA

Because they were silly.

BRUNO

This could be fun. This could be exciting. This could make us a fortune. Why do you have to put me through these changes?

SHEILA

Don't blame your changes on me, Bruno.

SOMETHING ABOUT YOU
WHEN WE WERE AT SCHOOL...
TRYING SO DESPERATELY
HARD TO BE COOL -
THE FLOWERS, THE BEADS,
THE BELT MADE OF ROPE,
THE HAIR AND THE BEARD -
YOU LOOKED LIKE A DOPE.
BUT UNDER THE HIP YOU HAD HOPE, BRUNO.
RECKLESS AND INNOCENT HOPE.

NOW YOU'VE DECIDED
TO CLEAN UP YOUR ACT,
AND EVEN THOUGH,
AS A MATTER OF FACT,
I LIKE YOU MUCH BETTER
WITHOUT THE FUZZ,
THERE'S SOMETHING I MISS
IN THE BRUNO THAT WAS.

ONCE YOU WOULD HOPE
FOR A BEAUTIFUL DAY.
NOW ALL YOU HOPE
IS TO MAKE THE DAY PAY.

(SHEILA, cont'd)

EVEN OUR WEDDING'S
A PART OF A DEAL.
HOW DO YOU THINK
THAT MAKES ME FEEL?

YOU'VE TURNED IT INTO A SCAM.
AND IT'S PISSING ME OFF, MY LAMB.

BRUNO

You don't like the way I'm handling the wedding? Give me input!

SHEILA

You really want my input?

BRUNO

Please!

SHEILA

LET'S GET THIS OVER WITH.
LET'S FINISH IT FAST.
I KNOW I PROMISED I WOULD HAVE PATIENCE, BRUNO,
BUT YOU KNOW THAT WON'T LAST.
LET'S GET THIS OVER WITH.
I'M NOT HAVING FUN.
OUR MARRIAGE SEEMS TO BE GETTING STALE
AND IT HASN'T EVEN BEGUN.

I CAN'T GET OVER IT.
YOU'RE MAKING ME CRACK.
LET'S DROP THIS SUICIDAL APPROACH
AND TRY TO FIND A SANER PLAN OF ATTACK.

BRUNO: So give me a better alternative!

SHEILA: A QUIET LITTLE BLOOD TEST.
A CEREMONY DOWNTOWN.
WHY SHOULD YOU HAVE TO RENT A SUIT?
WHY SHOULD I BUY A GOWN?
MAYBE AN ELOPEMENT...

BRUNO: Sheila...

SHEILA: LISTEN BEFORE YOU SAY NO!
JUST BECAUSE THERE'S A PARTY PLANNED
DOESN'T MEAN YOU AND I HAVE TO GO.

(SHEILA, cont'd.)

OR WE COULD SKIP THE WEDDING
AND GO ON LIVING IN SIN.
UNLESS YOU BELIEVE THAT WE HAVE TO ATONE
FOR THE SIN WE'VE ALREADY BEEN LIVING IN.

LET'S GET THIS OVER WITH.
I'M SICK OF THE FUSS.
IF WE DON'T GET THIS OVER AND DONE WITH SOON,
IT'LL SOON BE OVER WITH US.

HOW MUCH MORE
DO YOU THINK WE CAN TAKE?
IT'S CRAZY TO GO THROUGH
THIS PAIN FOR THE SAKE
OF A MEDIEVAL RITUAL
DONE BY A DUNCE
WHO GRUNTS AND MUTTERS,
THEN ALL AT ONCE,
POOF! YOU'RE A HUSBAND.
WHOOSH! I'M A WIFE.
LET'S GET THIS OVER WITH
AND GET ON WITH LIFE.

Act I, Scene 5

Red's office.

MAY files her nails. RED, at the piano, freely plays a hokey chord progression, humming the melody to "You Can Count On Me." MAY can't resist joining in.

MAY

COUNT ON ME TO REASSURE YOU.
COUNT ON ME TO BE...

RED

(Slamming down keyboard lid)

May!

MAY

(Startled)

Huh?

RED

What's with the Dolinko situation?

MAY

I said what you said, I said sorry for the inconvenience and I offered her the extra girl.

RED

Who'd you get?

MAY

No one.

RED

No one!

MAY

No one'll work for you.

RED

You ran down the list?

MAY

Not all of it.

RED

Run down the list.

MAY

(Seductively)

Red...

RED

Max Schmelin', May, the bookin' is Saturday.

MAY

Red...

RED

All we need is a head of hair and a pair of boobs in a slinky dress.

MAY

Red! (*RED looks up. MUSIC.*) I'm available.

RED

You're not ready.

MAY

I'll work for free.

RED

You're not ready.

MAY

Sometimes you make me think you're lying when you tell me I'm good!

RED

You're not ready!

MAY

Red...!
(Whining)

RED

WHAT ARE YOU BUSTIN' MY CHOPS FOR?
YOU'RE NEW TO THIS RACKET - IT'S NEW TO YOU.
THERE'S STILL LOTS OF STUFF
YOU AIN'T LEARNED HOW TO DO.
YOU'RE BITIN' OFF MORE
THAN YOUR CHOPPERS CAN CHEW.
WHAT ARE YOU POPPIN' YOUR TOP FOR?

MAY: Y'know, I didn't come here to get stuck doin' secretarial. If I wanted to get stuck doin' secretarial, there's other businesses I could've...

RED: YOU GOT A FUTURE WITH ME -
YOU'LL GET YOUR REQUEST.

MAY: I could make a lot more money than I'm making here, Red.

RED: YOU GOT A FUTURE WITH ME,
SO GIVE IT A REST.

MAY: And I could meet more interesting people than I meet in this dump.

RED: YOU GOT A FUTURE WITH ME -
YOU'LL BE ONE OF THE BEST.

MAY: This is not exactly the best I can do, if you want to know the truth.

RED: IT'S THE TRUT' -

MAY: Ha!

RED: YOU GOT A FUTURE.
ALL OF THE CLIENTS'LL FIGHT TO RECRUIT YA.
YOU GOT A FUTURE TO SUIT YA
WITH ME.

Believe me, Sweetheart, I'm doin' you a favor. Singin' on a club date is like gettin' laid. If your first time is rotten it'll ruin you forever.

What was your first time like, Red?

MAY

Call those names.

RED

MAY crosses to her desk and starts making phone calls. Enter ARTIE.

Mornin', Pop.

ARTIE

Maybe you know someone.

RED

Someone who?

ARTIE

A singer on Dolinko.

MAY

I'm singin' on Dolinko.

ARTIE

Like you're singin' on the haberdashers?

RED

Pop, I told you, the recording session...
ARTIE

With your Gigolos, yeah, I know. What song?
RED

"Count On Me."
ARTIE

My favorite tune.
RED

My arrangement.
ARTIE

Six-eight time. It's better as a fox trot.
RED

Sorry about the haberdashers.
ARTIE

Forget it, I'll get Lenny to cover. Concentrate on Dolinko.
RED

What's the problem?
ARTIE

We had a mixup. I hadda promise to throw in an extra broad.
RED

What about May?
ARTIE

MAY poses adorably.

Don't be a wise ass.
RED

I *did* meet a woman at the Levine affair...
ARTIE

What's she look like?
RED

ARTIE mimes a shapely behind.

Any good?

ARTIE

I don't know. She was with a lady who said she knows you. Frances *Baum*-something...

RED

Mandelbaum?

ARTIE

Sounds familiar...

RED

(Miming a big bottom)

Like this?

ARTIE

That's her.

RED

You know what's good for you you'll keep away from women like that.

ARTIE

Pop, she's old enough to be my mother.

RED

Leave your mother out of this! Tell me about the singer. Can you get a hold of her?

ARTIE

I'd love to get hold of her.

RED

You know what I mean.

ARTIE

I know where she works.

RED

Get a hold of her. *(MUSIC. To MAY)* And you - get a hold of some coffee for me and my son.

Exit MAY.

ARTIE

So?

RED

**SIT DOWN, ARTIE.
PULL UP A CHAIR.**

(RED, cont'd.)

I GUESS YOU WANNA KNOW
HOW COME I CALLED YOU HERE.
I'M THINKIN' THIS OVER
FOR A LONG TIME, SON.
SO DON'T INTERRUPT ME
TIL I'M DONE.

MAYBE YOU DON'T NOTICE
OR YOU DON'T WANNA SEE,
BUT I AIN'T SO HEALTHY
AS I USED TO BE.
IT STINKS TO THINK ABOUT IT
BUT IT'S TIME WE DID:
YOUR OLD MAN'S TURNED INTO
AN OLD MAN, KID.

ARTIE: THAT'S A CROCK.
YOU'RE A ROCK.

RED: DON'T INTERRUPT.

WHEN I WAS GETTIN' STARTED
I WAS JUST LIKE YOU.
MUSIC WAS THE ONLY THING
I CARED TO DO.
THEN I MET YOUR MOTHER, REST IN PEACE,
AND YOU CAME,
SO I HADDA LEARN TO MAKE A DOLLAR
IN THIS GAME...

ARTIE: YOU'RE ALLOWED
TO BE PROUD.

RED: DON'T INTERRUPT.

IT WAS ALL FOR YOU.
IT WASN'T ALWAYS FUN,
BUT I CAME THROUGH.
COULDA HELD OUT
AND JOINED A BIG-NAME CREW,
BUT YOU DON'T DEPEND ON LUCK
WHEN YOU'RE LOOKIN' FOR THE BUCK.
IT WAS ALL FOR YOU.

ARTIE: You've done a terrific job, Pop. But what was it you wanted to...

RED: Let me finish.

(RED, cont'd)

MAYBE THIS IS SOMETHING
I DON'T SAY TO YOU ENOUGH,
BUT YOU'RE GOOD, KID...

ARTIE: Thanks...

RED: YOU COULD BE NUMBER ONE
IF YOU ONLY HAD A CHANCE
TO SHOW OFF YOUR STUFF.

ARTIE: THAT'S WHAT I SAY, POP.

RED: DON'T INTERRUPT ME, SON.

I'm gonna give you that chance.

ARTIE: How?

RED: By makin' you boss here.

ARTIE: Boss?

RED: *(Enthusiastically)*
I got it all figured out. I'm lookin' at a beautiful condo in Pompano Beach...

ARTIE: Pompano?

RED: I figure if I go down in the fall and stay the winter, I can come back in the spring, help you with the wedding season.

ARTIE: But Dad...

RED: Summers, I'll run things while you go on vacation.

ARTIE: Dad...

RED: Before you know it, you won't need me anymore - and that'll suit me fine.

ARTIE: But Dad...

RED: THIS IS ALL FOR YOU.
THE BOTTOM LINE DEPENDS ON
WHAT YOU DO.
MAYBE THIS AIN'T ABOUT
YOUR DREAM-COME-TRUE,
BUT IT'S EVERYTHING I GOT,
AND AT LEAST YOU GOT A SHOT.
THIS IS ALL FOR...

(RED, cont'd.)

What's the matter?

ARTIE: This is not the kind of shot I had in mind.

RED: Whaddaya mean, it's not the shot?

ARTIE: I don't want to be stuck doin' club dates for the rest of my (life)...

RED: *(Impatient)* Artie, you're thirty-two years old. You gonna start again with the pop star?

ARTIE: Who said pop star? I'm just sayin' there's other things I can do with my...

RED: What? Talent? Everybody got talent. So what?

ARTIE: I'm not talkin' about everybody, Dad.

RED: WHAT ARE YOU BUSTIN YOUR NUTS FOR?
THERE'S BUMS WITH MORE TALENT
THAN YOU ON THE STREET
WITH HOLES IN THEIR POCKETS
AND RAGS ON THEIR FEET
SINGIN' FOR NICKELS
TO GET WHAT TO EAT.
WHAT ARE YOU BEIN' A PUTZ FOR?

THIS OPERATION'S A GOIN' THING.

ARTIE: Dad, I...

RED: I PROMISE YOU - IT'S GONNA PAY.

ARTIE: I appreciate what (you're trying to)...

RED: I CAN'T BELIEVE IT. I GIVE YOU A SHOT
AND YOU'RE READY TO THROW IT AWAY!

ARTIE: Can't you try to understand what I...

RED: YOU GOT A FUTURE WITH ME.
A PIECE OF THE PIE.

ARTIE: *(Aside)* I DON'T WANNA BE JUST LIKE HIM

RED: YOU GOT A FUTURE WITH ME.
THE LIMIT'S THE SKY.

ARTIE: *(Aside)* I'M NOT GONNA BE JUST LIKE HIM.

RED: YOU GOT A FUTURE WITH ME.
WHY WOULD I LIE?

ARTIE: *(Aside)* I WOULD RATHER POP A PILL AND DIE.

RED: IT'S THE TRUT' -

ARTIE: *(Firmly)* Listen, Dad...

RED: YOU GOT A FUTURE WITH...

ARTIE: MAYBE YOU DON'T NOTICE
OR YOU DON'T WANNA SEE,
BUT THERE'S OTHER THINGS IN LIFE
I THINK I STILL COULD BE.

RED: MAYBE YOU'RE PULLIN' YOUR CHAIN.

ARTIE: MAYBE NOT.

RED: *(Disgusted)* Aww...

ARTIE: BUT I'LL NEVER FIND OUT
IF I NEVER GET A SHOT.

RED: BUT I'M GIVIN' YOU A SHOT,
YOU LITTLE SNOT.

ARTIE: DON'T INTERRUPT!

(Pause)

THIS IS ALL FOR YOU.
YOU'RE SAYIN' IT'S FOR ME,
BUT IT'S FOR YOU.

RED: What are you talkin' about...

ARTIE: YOU GO TO FLORIDA, SLEEP AND DRINK
WHILE I DROP EVERYTHING TO PICK UP THE STINK
COMIN' OFF OF THIS LOAD OF CRAP YOU THINK...

RED: Wait a minute...

ARTIE: ...I SHOULD HAUL FOR YOU.
THIS IS ALL FOR...

RED: Wait a minute! You think this business is a load of crap?

ARTIE: Sorry, Pop...

RED: My business?

ARTIE: I got excited...

RED: Our business?

ARTIE: It's just that I...

RED: *(Putting his hand over his heart)*
I know, kid - you're thinkin' you're worth more than I'm giving you now.

ARTIE: Dad...

RED: Don't look at now.

ARTIE: You okay?

RED: Don't look at now! You got brains. Use 'em. Before you know it, you'll be bigger than Morty Mann, (the piece of shit)...

ARTIE: But Dad...

RED: I know, I know, this is very sudden. I don't expect an answer right away. Think it over...

ARTIE: There's nothing to think...

RED: Think it over! *(Standing)* I'm gonna grab a bite. You wanna come?

ARTIE: I got things to do.

RED: Don't forget the singer. *(As he heads for the door)*

ARTIE: Don't worry about it. And Dad... *(RED stops.)* No cocktails.

RED: Don't worry about it

MAY enters with coffee as RED exits. Neither of the men seem to notice her. ARTIE remains seated, looking at the door through which his father just left. A separate spot comes up on RED outside the door. He stops, turns and looks back at it.

BOTH: ALL FOR YOU.
I ALWAYS PUT MYSELF
ON CALL FOR YOU.

RED: WHY DID I WORK
UNTIL I'M ALMOST DEAD?

ARTIE: WHY DON'T I DO
WHAT I WANT INSTEAD?

BOTH: WHY DO I ALWAYS
BEAT MY HEAD
AGAINST A WALL FOR YOU?

ALL FOR YOU.

Act I, Scene 6

The Caboose.

A dumpy lounge near the commuter lines. Trains and other station noises are occasionally heard in the background.

Lighting rises to the accompaniment of the indifferent applause of the Caboose's PATRONS (CHORUS). SHEILA, on a dangerous-looking platform, is in the middle of a set, playing an out-of-tune electric piano to the beat of an obsolete drum machine.

SHEILA

Thank you. That ends our request segment, and I'm always happy to play the songs you love to hear. Our next segment is the one I personally enjoy most, which as soon as I find the right...

She tries various settings on the drum machine.

(Goddam piece of...) Mikey's really sweet to let me (shit!) do this, don't you think? And as soon as I can... (what's wrong with this pic...) As soon as I can...ah!

She vamps on the piano. MUSIC.

Ladies and gentlemen, the other side of Sheila Burns!

Enter ARTIE. He sits at an empty table.

SHEILA

HOW'D YOU LIKE TO LISTEN
TO THE SONG I WROTE?
THE SONG I WROTE.
THE SONG I WROTE.
HOW'D YOU LIKE TO LISTEN
TO THE SONG I WROTE?
I WROTE IT FOR PEOPLE LIKE YOU.

I'M THE ONE WHO THOUGHT UP EVERY
WORD AND NOTE.
THERE'S NOT ONE QUOTE
IN THE SONG I WROTE.
I'M THE ONE WHO THOUGHT UP EVERY
WORD AND NOTE,
DEVOTED TO PEOPLE LIKE YOU.

(SHEILA. cont'd.)

ON THE OTHER HAND,
MAYBE YOU'D PREFER
A MORE FAMILIAR TUNE.
A SING-ALONG SONG.
WE'LL GET TO THAT SOON.

BUT IF YOU'D RATHER LISTEN TO
THE SONG I WROTE,
THE SONG I WROTE
I'LL CLEAR MY THROAT ("AHEM!").
IF YOU'D LIKE TO LISTEN TO
THE SONG I WROTE,
I'M READY TO SING IT,
I'M READY TO SWING IT,
I'M READY TO BRING IT TO YOU.

SHEILA continues vamping as she speaks.

Tonight's selection is a little ditty I finished only last night, and it's about...well, that's what you're about to discover, isn't it? I hope you enjoy listening to it as much as I enjoyed writing it!

She sets the beat box to a slower tempo.

(Too soulfully)

YOU'RE RUBBING ME THE WRONG WAY.
YOU'RE DOING IT ON PURPOSE.
YOU'RE RUBBING ME THE WRONG WAY.
YOU'RE MAKING ME NERVOUS.
YOU'RE RUBBING ME THE WRONG WAY,
AS IF I WAS A FOOL.
KEEP YOUR FINGERS TO YOURSELF.
PLEASE DON'T BE CRUEL.

IF YOU WERE A MAN,
ALL THE RIGHT MOVES YOU'D KNOW.
AND YOU WOULDN'T BE ROUGH,
YOU'D BE GENTLE AND SLOW.
IF YOU WERE A MAN,
YOU WOULD LEND ME A HAND
'STEAD OF ALWAYS HANDLING ME
LIKE I AM A MAGIC LAMP.

STOP RUBBING ME THE WRONG WAY.
YOUR MAKING ME FEEL CRABBY.
LEARN TO RUB THE RIGHT WAY -
THAT WOULD MAKE ME HAPPY.

(SHEILA, cont'd.)

STOP RUBBING ME THE WRONG WAY.
PLEASE RUB ME RIGHT.
DON'T RUB ME THE WRONG WAY.
LOVE ME TONIGHT.

Scant ovation, except from ARTIE, who applauds sharply and enthusiastically.

Thank you. You're so sweet. Thank you. I'll be back in twenty minutes with a tribute to Phil Spector - plug in the juke box, Mikey. Meanwhile, the bar's open, lap it up. Mikey says there's a special on knockwurst steamed in beer with potatoes au gratin. Snatch it please, it's yummy.

She turns off her microphone with a loud pop and goes directly to ARTIE's table.

Do I know you?

ARTIE

You really can sing!

SHEILA

(Recognizing him)

Oh my God...!

ARTIE

Can I buy you a beer?

SHEILA

The bar-mitzvah king!

ARTIE

Maybe some wine?

SHEILA

I'm working. I didn't recognize you without your cummerbund.

ARTIE

I loved your song.

SHEILA

(Flattered)

Did you?

ARTIE

You should write more.

SHEILA

My fiancé thinks I write too much already.

ARTIE

How'd you like to do a gig with my band?

SHEILA

(Cool)

I don't do club dates.

ARTIE

This is a very classy affair.

SHEILA

I'm sure it is, but I have principles.

ARTIE

Your principles let you work in lounges.

SHEILA

In lounges you get to throw in an original song once in a while.

ARTIE

Do people listen?

SHEILA

No. But you still get to do them. Look, it's sweet of you to come out of your way to make me this offer, but I'm not interested.

ARTIE

Even if I let you do some of your originals?

SHEILA

(Interested)

You can do that?

ARTIE

I'm the boss' son, I can do whatever I want.

SHEILA

How many guests?

ARTIE

Two hundred couples.

SHEILA

How many songs?

Whatever.

ARTIE

With dinner or while people are dancing?

SHEILA

Your choice.

ARTIE

Any particular kind of music?

SHEILA

You pick it. Of course, I'd have to go over the material with you in advance, but if what you did tonight is any indication...

ARTIE

Where can I drop off my lead sheets?

SHEILA

You mean you'll do it?

ARTIE

They're not very neat.

SHEILA

Why not do them here, instead of the Spector tribute?

ARTIE

I've already done my quota of originals for tonight.

SHEILA

I'll pick up the lead sheets.

ARTIE

I have a better idea. Let's get together, I'll play them for you.

SHEILA

You're on.

ARTIE

You really liked my song?

SHEILA

Loved it.

ARTIE

You don't think it needs...

SHEILA

ARTIE

Not a thing. A change here and there in the melody, an adjustment in the harmony, some goosing in the rhythm, an edit or two in the lyric, but aside from that the song is perfect.

SHEILA

(Flattered)

Thanks. *(Pause)* Can you stick around for my last set?

ARTIE

If you'd like me to...

SHEILA

(A little too hastily)

I'd like you to. *(Embarrassed)* I mean, I'd like to take you up on that drink.

ARTIE

Good.

SHEILA starts moving towards the bandstand, then stops.

SHEILA

Y'know - I should've said this at Benny's bar mitzvah, but I think you're too good to be doing club dates.

ARTIE

You're really making my night.

SHEILA

You remind me of Frankie Vali.

ARTIE

Now you're making my week.

MUSIC.

SHEILA

See you later.

She moves to the platform. Lighting dims over all but ARTIE.

ARTIE

(Infatuated)

JUST LIKE ME.
SOMETHING'S WRONG WITH HER.
JUST LIKE ME.
I BELONG WITH HER --

(ARTIE, cont'd.)

SHE'S LIKE ME.
SHE UNDERSTANDS.

LIKEWISE,
I'M LIKE HER.
JUST ABOUT TO REACH MY
PRIME LIKE HER.
IT'S SO EASY TO BE TAKEN FOR A FLAKE
WHEN YOU'RE WAITING FOR A BREAK
LIKE HER.

DIDN'T TELL HER HOW I FEEL INSIDE,

SHEILA: Nice guy...
ARTIE: BUT SHE SAW ME FOR WHAT'S REAL INSIDE.
SHEILA: Cute, too...
ARTIE: WHO'D'VE THOUGHT I'D EVER MEET A WOMAN WHO
SEES THE WORLD THE WAY I DO
LIKE SHE DOES?
SHEILA: Some lucky woman's gonna get a hold of...
ARTIE: BUT IT'S JUST LIKE ME -
SHEILA: Not me...
ARTIE: LUSTIN' AFTER SOMEONE ELSE'S
BRIDE-TO-BE
SHEILA: I'm a bride-to-be!
ARTIE: GUESS I'M GONNA HAVE TO KEEP IT
ALL BENEATH THE CRUST
AND BE HAPPY IF SHE JUST
LIKES ME.
SHEILA: I wonder what he thinks of me.
ARTIE: IF SHE JUST LIKES ME.

Act I, Scene 7

Red's office.

After hours. RED sits in dim light, smoking a cigarette, his coffee cup in front of him. He takes a whiskey bottle out of the bottom drawer and pours some into the cup.

Enter FRANCES, smiling. RED stares.

I don't get a good-to-see-you?

FRANCES

Who says it is?

RED

Someone's sitting there?

FRANCES

Have a seat, Frances.

RED

She sits. RED manages a smile.

You look terrific.

FRANCES

Thank you.

RED

Morty takes good care of you.

FRANCES

I take care of myself now.

RED

I told you from the start it wouldn't work.

FRANCES

We were married thirty years, Red.

RED

Too late for regrets. What can I do for you?

FRANCES

Tell me again I look terrific.

RED

What do you want from me?

FRANCES

You're not surprised to see me?

RED

I know all about the bar-mitzvah, Frances, my kid told me.

FRANCES

I'm here about *my* son.

RED

(Smiling)

That's right, I heard - you had a little boy.

FRANCES

He's thirty-five. I want your orchestra to play his wedding.

RED

What's the matter with his father?

FRANCES

I'd tell you but I only have time for a short visit.

RED

That bad, huh?

FRANCES

What about the wedding?

RED

If you want I'll throw something together, but on short notice don't expect me to...

FRANCES

I don't want something thrown together. I want Artie.

RED

Artie's booked solid two years.

FRANCES

Borrow him.

RED

I got ethics, Frances.

FRANCES

The affair is March the seventh. I want twelve pieces.

RED

Sorry, kid...

FRANCES

We're holding it at my place...

RED

Your place?

FRANCES

The Abracadabra Manor - I've taken it over.

RED

You?

FRANCES

Why not? I know the business.

RED

That sewer?

FRANCES

I've put a lot of money into it.

RED

Morty's money.

FRANCES

My money. And when we open it's going to be the most elegant room in Brooklyn.

RED

That cesspool?

FRANCES

Come out and see for yourself.

RED

For what?

FRANCES

We'll have lunch, talk over old times.

RED

I don't wanna talk over old times.

FRANCES

I can throw a lot of business your way.

RED

What kind of business can you throw me?

The CHORUS appears in pink light, dressed in tropical attire.

FRANCES

Do a good job - and I don't see how Artie can fail - I'll recommend your office for any party we book.

RED

You expect me to believe this?

CHORUS
POMPANO BEACH...

But I must have Artie.

FRANCES

CHORUS
POMPANO BEACH...

It's a lousy idea...

RED

Trust me.

FRANCES

CHORUS
POMPANO...

Trust you?

RED

(Laughing)
We were kids, Red.

FRANCES

You were kids. I was building something.

RED

You got to me too early.

FRANCES

Morty got to you right on time.

RED

He knew how to handle me. You put me on a pedestal.

FRANCES

I was a kid, for Christ's sake!

RED

MUSIC.

(Gently)
Red, I have cars.

FRANCES

RED
I can't do business with a woman that stabbed me in the back.

You need this.

FRANCES

Not from you.

RED

I'm in the business. I see what's going on.

FRANCES

I don't need any help from you, Frances!

RED

FRANCES

WHY ARE YOU BEING SO FOOLISH?
WHO DO YOU THINK
YOU'RE TRYING TO CON?
WHAT'S DONE IS DONE,
WHAT'S GONE IS GONE.
YOU CAN'T LET YOUR GRUDGES
GO ON AND ON.
WHY ARE YOU BEING SO MULISH?

RED: That was some job you did on me, Frances.

FRANCES: YOU NEED AN OPPORTUNITY;
I'M HERE TO GIVE YOU YOUR CHANCE.
CAN'T YOU HEAR IT?
I'M PLAYING YOUR SONG.
WHY DON'T YOU GET UP AND DANCE?

RED: I think I'll sit this one out, thanks.

FRANCES: WE HAVE A FUTURE TOGETHER.
GOOD TIMES ARE GUARANTEED.
WE HAVE A FUTURE TOGETHER.
I HAVE WHAT YOU NEED.
I'LL TAKE CARE OF YOU
IF YOU TAKE CARE OF ME.
SHOW A LITTLE FAITH.
LET YOURSELF AGREE.

WE HAVE A FUTURE,
A FUTURE BUILT TO LAST,
IF WE FORGET THE PAST.

(Standing)

Think it over, Red. I'll be at the place all day Wednesday.

RED

Glad to hear it.

FRANCES

You remember where it is?

RED

On the Belt Parkway. Near the landfills. And it's still a lousy idea.

FRANCES

You'll come. Two o'clock. And bring Artie. Don't disappoint me.

RED

(Escorting her to the door)

Don't plan your day around it.

FRANCES

(Kissing him on the cheek)

It's so good to see you, Red. *(Pause)* Isn't it good to see me? *(Pause)* Come on, Red - you must think of me sometimes... *(Pause)* Wednesday, Red.

Exit FRANCES. RED pours a drink.

RED

SOME NIGHTS I DRIVE INTO MANHATTAN,
I'LL KILL SOME TIME AND CATCH A SHOW.
BEHIND THE NEON LIGHTS
ON FORTY SECOND STREET,
I SEE THE THEATERS WHERE WE'D GO.

WALK UP TO FIFTY FIRST AND BROADWAY -
A LITTLE BAR THAT'S GOT A VIEW.
I SEE THE NEON LIGHTS
REFLECTED ON THE STREET,
AND I REMEMBER YOU.

WHEN THE RADIO PLAYS
A SONG WE LOVED;
WHEN THE TELEVISION PUTS ON
A PICTURE WE KNEW;
WHEN SOMEBODY DIES
THAT WE USED TO IDOLIZE -
I REMEMBER YOU.

NOW THEY GOT PORNO IN THE THEATERS.
THE NEON LIGHTS ARE JAPANESE.
THE KIDS, THEY LAUGH AT THE PICTURES
AND SONGS THAT WE KNEW,
AND I HARDLY EVER THINK OF
DOIN' THINGS WE USED TO DO.

(RED, cont'd.)

BUT SOMETIMES WHEN I SIT AROUND
HAVIN' ONE OR TWO,
I REMEMBER YOU.
I REMEMBER YOU.

Act I, Scene 8

A recording studio.

DREW, ROLLO and STUEY sit around a microphone in a large recording studio. A bored ENGINEER drinking coffee from a cardboard container and reading a tabloid is in the control room on the other side of the glass.

You sure he said he'll be here?

ROLLO

He'll be here.

DREW

Where the hell is he?

STUEY

Give him ten minutes.

DREW

(Over intercom)

Your clock starts in five.

ENGINEER

You *sure* he wants to do this?

ROLLO

Maybe we should put an ad in the Voice.

STUEY

No one can do this tune like Artie.

DREW

What good is that if he's only on the demo and not with the band?

STUEY

This demo's gonna sell the band, Stuey.

DREW

What happens when we're booked and they find out there's no front man?

ROLLO

Don't be so quick to count Artie out.

DREW

He's a club date musician!

ROLLO

I don't see Artie cuttin' that crap forever. Sooner or later...

DREW

Enter ARTIE, awed by the studio.

This is the shit!

STUEY
Mister Bonay.

ARTIE

ROLLO
Artie!

DREW
You made it!

This is the shit!

ARTIE

And it's paid for.

DREW

Your clock is ticking.

ENGINEER

How's the voice?

DREW

A little tired, but okay.

ARTIE

Your clock...

ENGINEER

Ready to try one?

ROLLO

Tell me what to do.

ARTIE

(To ENGINEER)
We're gonna try one.

STUEY

ROLLO, STUEY, ARTIE and DREW take their positions around the microphone. We hear the sound of tape rewinding.

Hey Artie...

DREW

Yeah?

ARTIE

Tell me...

DREW

What?

ARTIE

Is this the shit?

DREW

This is the absolute shit.

ARTIE

The ENGINEER starts the machinery. Eight clicks establish the tempo before the rhythm section kicks in. ARTIE sings lead. The others sing harmony.

ARTIE

CALL ME WHEN YOU'RE BLUE.
YOU CAN COUNT ON ME TO SEE YOU THROUGH.
COUNT ON ME TO REASSURE YOU
COUNT ON ME TO BE RIGHT THERE FOR YOU.

As the song progresses, ROLLO, STUEY and DREW look at each other expressing obvious pleasure in ARTIE's performance.

CALL ME WHEN YOU'RE ALL ALONE,
AND I'LL BE OVER THERE BEFORE YOU
HANG UP THE PHONE.
WHEN THE NIGHTS ARE BARE AND COLD
AND YOU NEED A HAND TO HOLD,
I GUARANTEE
YOU CAN COUNT ON ME.

Thumbs-up all around. Cross-fade to Red's office.

Act I, Scene 9

Red's office.

RED sits at the piano playing a lush arrangement of "You Can Count On Me," a coffee mug in front of him. MAY reads a tabloid.

Enter MORTY MANN.

Can I help you?

MAY

What's in the cup, Bonano?

MORTY

Mr. Bonano's busy, sir. Is there something I can...

MAY

(Crossing past her to RED)
This is a very juicy tomato, Red.

MORTY

(Flattered)
Thank you! I think.

MAY

(Not happy to see him)
What do you want?

RED

(Crossing to RED)
I'm in the neighborhood, I figure I'll drop by, see if you're dead yet.

MORTY

What are you doin' in my neighborhood?

RED

Real estate. I'm lookin' at an office.

MORTY

(Stunned)
In Bensonhurst?

RED

(Amused)
What's the matter kid?

MORTY

You come here to tell me this?

RED

MORTY

Naw, I'm in the neighborhood, I figure I'll drop by, see if you're...

RED

Cut the crap, Morty.

Enter ARTIE.

ARTIE

Mornin', Pop. May.

MORTY

So this is Artie Bonay!

RED

(To ARTIE)

Morty Mann.

MORTY

The caterers say you're terrific, like a young Red Bonano.

ARTIE

Only the old caterers.

MORTY

You're like Red, you're like no one else. People couldn't get enough of him when I worked for him.

ARTIE

(To RED)

He worked for you?

MORTY

Pickup work. Whenever he needed an extra horn.

RED

Nobody else would hire you.

ARTIE

(A playful reprimand)

Pop!

MORTY

He's right. I got in trouble, your old man came through. Now I wanna do the same for him, he don't let me. *(To RED)* Face it, kid. I open up in Brooklyn, you get hurt.

RED

I'm busy, Morty.

MORTY

Say we do this. Instead of I open up and you shut down, you run my Brooklyn office.

RED

You're out of your mind.

MORTY

Run it right here if you want. I'll buy you out, put you on salary, you don't have to worry 'bout nothin'.

RED

I'm not interested.

MUSIC.

MORTY

All you gotta do is book the players. I'll handle the accounts. With the extra time you could even start playin' dates again.

RED

I'm not interested, Morty!

MORTY: WHAT ARE YOU BUSTIN' YOUR HUMP FOR?
YOU'RE LOSIN' YOUR SHIRT,
YOU'RE LOSIN' YOUR DRIVE,
YOU'RE BARELY JUST KEEPIN'
YOUR BUSINESS ALIVE.
YOU'RE SIXTY YEARS OLD
AND YOU LOOK SIXTY FIVE.
WHAT ARE YOU BEIN' A CHUMP FOR?

A MAN YOUR AGE NEEDS SECURITY.
LIVIN' LIKE THIS - IT AIN'T NICE.
WHY DON'T YOU COME TO WORK FOR ME?
WHY DON'T YOU TAKE MY ADVICE?

RED: Why don't you go to hell twice?

MORTY: YOU GOT A FUTURE WITH ME.
I'M YOUR BEST BET.

ARTIE: This is not such a terrible offer.

MORTY: YOU GOT A FUTURE WITH ME THAT
YOU WON'T REGRET.

ARTIE: Maybe he's not the bastard you think he is.

MORTY: YOU GOT A FUTURE WITH ME.
YOU'RE NOT DEAD YET.

ARTIE: This could be the answer, Dad.

MORTY: IT'S THE TRUTH.

ARTIE: Dad?

MORTY: YOU GOT A FUTURE WITH ME.

Don't be stupid, Bonano. I'm not doin' this to help myself.

RED

You can help yourself out of my office.

MORTY

Don't be smart!

RED

What else, Morty?

MORTY

Nothin'. Like I said, I'm in the neighborhood.

RED

Then it's been a pleasure.

MORTY

You're right, kid. We got things to do.

He begins to leave, stopping at MAY's desk.

This is a very juicy tomato, Red. *(To MAY)* Girl like you, you should be in front of a band.

MAY mugs at RED triumphantly. Exit MORTY.

ARTIE

What'd you talk to him like that for?

RED

(To MAY)

Get Frances Mandelbaum on the phone.

ARTIE

Sheila's mother-in-law? You have business with...

RED

Tell her we wanna confirm that Wednesday meeting.

As MAY dials, RED takes a whiskey bottle out of the piano bench and pours some his coffee mug.

ARTIE
We? Is this about the wedding?

RED
Not just the wedding. This is long-term, a world-class catering establishment. We make good, she throws everything our way.

ARTIE
Long-term?

RED
We gotta nail this account, kid.

ARTIE
I can't commit to a long-term...

RED
Why? You got somethin' better?

ARTIE
I have to be open, just in case...

RED
Help me nail it, then be open.

ARTIE
What about Morty's offer?

RED
To put me on salary?

ARTIE
What's wrong with that?

RED
You want me to work for that piece of...

ARTIE
All I'm saying is talk to the man.

RED
I'm not gonna sell our business out from under you.

ARTIE
Don't worry about me. This may be exactly what we...

We don't need Morty!

RED

We need something!

ARTIE

Why?

RED

Because you can't go on like this. And Morty seems like a reasonable...

ARTIE

He's an assassin!

RED

(Raising his voice)
If he doesn't buy you out, he'll push you out. What's the difference?

ARTIE

He's not pushin' anybody. We won't let him.

RED

At least think it over.

ARTIE

I thought it over.

RED

Look at things the way they are. You'll make all of us happy.

ARTIE

All of us?

RED

You, me, Morty...

ARTIE

You wanna make Morty happy?

RED

Dad...

ARTIE

Get out.

RED

Dad...

ARTIE

RED

Go to your Gigolos, live like a bum, throw away your chances, throw away mine, only don't come back here to say you're sorry.

ARTIE

I'm sorry, Dad, I...

RED

Out!

Exit ARTIE. RED pours a drink as pink fluorescent lighting comes up on the CHORUS, dressed in tuxedos and evening gowns. RED addresses them.

Who needs him?

MAY

You don't mean that.

RED

I got along fine without him before he came along, I'll get along fine without him now.

MAY

He has his own life after all.

RED

Who needs him!

He takes a sip of his drink.

MAY

Maybe you *should* think it over, Red. You can't keep him here if he doesn't want to stay. And under all that crust, Morty seems like a nice guy.

RED

(To MAY)

Nice guy! He quits the band and steals my woman, he's lookin' to steal my business he's a nice guy?

MAY

I just think maybe you'd be better off...

RED

What the hell do you know about it!

He puts a cigarette into his mouth. MUSIC.

Morty. *(He lights the cigarette.)* A big nothin'. *(Imitating a trumpet)* B-bottom bah!

He pours another drink.

(RED, cont'd.)

(Addressing the CHORUS)

Didn't make it big 'til after he found out he wasn't any good on that little horn of his.

He drains the glass.

B-bottom bah!

He pours another drink. The CHORUS gathers around him. From this point on, MAY gradually recedes from view.

That's what we used to call him. Guys'd be standin' around the Exchange Floor at the Union, Morty comes in, we'd say "There he goes, B-bottom Bah," and all of us would laugh. Wanna know why?

He drains the glass as the CHORUS members, amused, nod in encouragement. RED pours another.

When Morty played a date, you'd tell him, "Morty - can you do a beguine?" And Morty says, "Sure," and he warms up the valves while we play...

The ORCHESTRA plays a few bars of a beguine. RED sings along

LA LA LALALA LA LA
LA LALA LA LALA
LA LA LA...

(Miming a trumpet)

"B-bottom bah!" Then you'd say, "Morty - can you do a fox trot?" And Morty says, "Sure," and starts puckerin' up while we play...

The ORCHESTRA plays a few bars of a fox trot, RED singing and snapping his fingers in time.

BOP DO DOP DO-DAH
BOP DO DOP DO-DAH
BADA DO DOP DO-DAH
BADA DO DOP DO-DAH
BADA DO DADA DO DAH...

"B-bottom bah!" Same thing with a Polka. I pick up the squeeze box and get the people dancin', I give a look at Morty, and Morty licks his lips and right on cue, "Bada-bottom bah!"

Same with the Jewish music - "B-bottom bah!" With a waltz - "B-bottom bah!" With a jig - "B-bottom bah!" He even did it with my music. You say, "Morty - my grandma wants to dance the tarantella, make it good." And what does he do? "B-bottom bah! B-bottom bah!" (Increasingly spiteful) "B-bottom bah, b-bottom bah, b-bottom bah, b-bottom bah!" *(Pause)* B-bottom bah!

Vamp begins.

(RED, cont'd.)

Now he's the king of club dates. And I'll tell you why. It's cause people today don't know what music is. They don't know the difference between what's good and what's bad, so whatever shit Morty's office serves 'em, these people are eatin' it up. But that's not how it was in the old days.

BACK IN THE FORTIES
(THOSE WERE THE YEARS!)
THEY LIKED IT WHEN A MELODY
WOULD TICKLE THEIR EARS.
THE RHYTHM WAS NEVER
THE SAME AS THE BEAT.
YOU DANCED IN A BALLROOM,
NOT IN THE STREET.
WHEN SOMEONE NEEDED MUSIC
IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD,
THEY SAID "NOBODY ELSE IN BENSONHURST
CAN PLAY IT AS GOOD
AS RED."

CHORUS: RED BONANO
THE SKINNY, SINGING NEOPOLITANO
RED BONANO
A KITTEN ON THE KEYS OF THE PIANO.
IF YOU'RE HAVING A BASH
OR A SMALL SOIREE,
HE'S GOT THE GREATEST LITTLE ORCHESTRA
BROOKLYN TODAY.

RED: BACK IN THE FIFTIES,
BUSINESS WAS GREAT.
SEVEN NIGHTS A WEEK THE BAND
WAS DOIN' A DATE.
WE DID THE MAMBO, SAMBA AND THE
BUNNY HOP.
WE DID EM FAST AND SLOW,
AND WE WOULDN'T STOP

UNTIL THE PARTY DID
AND THEY WOULD BEG FOR MORE.
THEY SAID "THE RED BONANO BAND
KNOWS WHAT MUSIC IS FOR".

CHORUS: RED BONANO
THE MAN OF MANY MOODS ON THE PIANO.
RED BONANO

RED: "CON SENTIMENTO E CON DULCIANO."

CHORUS: IF YOU'RE HAVING A BASH
OR A SMALL SOIREE',
HE'S GOT THE GREATEST LITTLE COMBO
IN THE CITY TODAY.

RED: BACK IN THE SIXTIES,
THINGS BEGAN TO CHANGE.
POPULAR MUSIC
GOT UGLY AND STRANGE.
KIDS BEGAN TO ASK FOR
ROCK AND ROLL.
FIRST IT WAS THE MONKEY,
THEN THE SLOP AND THE STROLL.

BUT WHEN SOPHISTICATED PEOPLE
ASK, "WHATEVER BECAME
OF CIVILIZED MUSIC?",
THEY THINK OF MY NAME...

CHORUS: RED.

RED/CHORUS: RED BONANO
BONANO AND HIS MAGICAL PIANO.
RED BONANO

CHORUS: THE FAT AND FUNNY NEOPOLITANO.

IF IT'S MUSIC, HE'LL SUPPLY IT FOR YOU
ON DEMAND.

RED: YOU GET EXACTLY WHAT YOU PAY FOR
WITH BONANO'S BAND.

CHORUS: IF YOU'RE HAVING A BASH,
OR A SMALL SOIREE',
IT'S THE GREATEST LITTLE OFFICE
IN THE BUSINESS TODAY.
RED.

CHORUS: RED BONANO.
RED BONANO.
RED.

RED/CHORUS: BONANO BO-BANO
RED BONANO RO-BANO
BO-BANO
RED BONANO.

Act I, Scene 10

Another catering hall.

BUDDY, LENNY and DREW perform a lively dance arrangement. ARTIE and SHEILA share a microphone, enjoying each other.

ARTIE/BUDDY/LENNY: YOU'RE RUBBING ME THE WRONG WAY...
SHEILA: RUB ME RIGHT.
ARTIE/BUDDY/LENNY: YOU'RE RUBBING ME THE WRONG WAY...
SHEILA: LOVE ME TONIGHT.
ARTIE/BUDDY/LENNY: YOU'RE RUBBING ME THE...
SHEILA: ...WRONG WAY...
ARTIE/BUDDY/LENNY: YOU'RE RUBBING ME THE...
SHEILA: ...WRONG WAY.
ARTIE/BUDDY/LENNY: YOU'RE RUBBING ME THE...
SHEILA: ...WRONG WAY.
ARTIE/BUDDY/LENNY: YOU'RE RUBBING ME THE...
ARTIE: BOOGIE DOWN, PEOPLE!
ALL: HUNHH!

DREW plays a dazzling though uninspired solo. On ARTIE's signal, the BAND segues into an instrumental ballad. ARTIE leads SHEILA to a small table near the bandstand. DREW puts down his guitar and follows, lighting cigarette.

SHEILA

Sensational! I can't believe you have to do club dates for a living.

ARTIE

(Pouring water into two glasses)

We're typical.

SHEILA

And Drew, your solo! I can't believe what it did for my song.

DREW

I gotta make a call.

He exits.

SHEILA

And this crowd, these people, this audience! I can't believe this is club dates.

ARTIE

(Handing her a glass)

They like you. You're a natural.

You think so?
 SHEILA
 They love you.
 ARTIE
 But it's club dates.
 SHEILA
 And they're crazy about your song.
 ARTIE
 You really think so?
 SHEILA
 I know so. You should perform it at *your* wedding.
 ARTIE
 No!
 SHEILA
 Better yet, why not do a whole set of your material?
 ARTIE
 A whole set!
 SHEILA
 What could be more novel?
 ARTIE
(Delighted)
 SHEILA
 Bruno would kill me!
 ARTIE
 That could be more novel.
 SHEILA
 But your arrangement put the song across, Artie. I don't think my other stuff'll sound as good without...
 ARTIE
 I'll help you.
 SHEILA
 You'd do that? For me?
 ARTIE
 We're friends, aren't we? Just say when and I'll...
 SHEILA
 How about next Wednesday? Come have dinner with Bruno and me, and we'll get down to it afterwards.

You're on.

ARTIE

A whole set!

SHEILA

Enter DREW, excited.

They're gonna sign us.

DREW

No!

ARTIE

They flipped for the demo. We do the record in March and tour for three months starting April.

DREW

April to June?

ARTIE

We have to decide on a "B" side. Something that rocks - what do you think?

DREW

April to June is wedding season.

ARTIE

Fuck wedding season, this is the shit, you said so yourself.

DREW

That's eighty percent of my father's business.

ARTIE

What about our business?

DREW

You don't know these people. They don't get what they want, they cancel.

ARTIE

The same is true for the record company.

DREW

I need time to work this out.

ARTIE

(Snuffing cigarette)
Well work it out by tomorrow, because that's when we sign. Unless you decide not to be there.

DREW

DREW gets back on the bandstand, picks up his guitar, and joins the song in progress.

SHEILA

You're not thinking of passing on this, are you?

ARTIE

It's risky what he says.

SHEILA

Being born is risky. Does that mean you should be afraid of growing up?

ARTIE

Three months is a long time.

SHEILA

How long do you think it'll be before you get another chance like this?

ARTIE

I'll never get another chance like this.

SHEILA

Artie, if this is what you really want to do you owe it to yourself to... I mean, I know it's not my business, but...

ARTIE

Don't apologize. I'm glad you're taking an interest.

SHEILA

We're friends, aren't we?

ARTIE

And I'm glad we're friends.

SHEILA

I just hate to think a guy like you might ever have anything to feel, well, ridiculous about.

ARTIE

Sheila, I promise, I have nothing to feel ridiculous about.

He gets back onto the bandstand and signals the band to stop.

(Into microphone)

Ladies and gentlemen, there comes a time in all our lives when we have to show the world what we're made of. This one of them.

DRUM ROLL.

**MAYBE I JUST MIGHT TELL YOU
HOW ALL OF US CAN HAVE A LITTLE FUN**

(ARTIE, cont'd.)

WE CAN DO THE DINKY-DIDO
TIL THE BREAK OF DAY,
AND I JUST MIGHT SHOW YOU
HOW THE DANCE IS DONE.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO KNOW HOW IT'S DONE?

TAP YOUR TOOTSIE-WOOTSIES,
WOBBLE YOUR KNEES,
FLAP AROUND YOUR HANDS
LIKE A LEAF IN THE BREEZE,
WIGGLE YOUR WHATCHAMADAD,
YOUR PARTNER A SQUEEZE:
YOU'RE DOIN' THE DINKY- DIDO.

I don't see anyone dancing. Maybe the youngsters can get things started. Paul, Mindy, Brian... You too, Annie - bring your mommy along. What a mommy! Now everybody else watch carefully. If you think you're talented enough to give it a go, I want you to join in on the next round. Are we ready?

BAND: TAP YOUR TOOTSIE-WOOTSIES...
ARTIE: That's right! That's right!
BAND: WOBBLE YOUR KNEES...
ARTIE: Like you were dyin' from fright, c'mon!
BAND: FLAP AROUND YOUR HANDS...
ARTIE: Get 'em up, get 'em up, get 'em up in the air.
BAND: LIKE A LEAF IN THE BREEZE...
ARTIE: Look, look - like him over there! Looky-looky!

BAND: WIGGLE YOUR WHATCHAMADAD,
GIVE YOUR PARTNER A SQUEEZE,

ARTIE: YOU'RE DOIN' THE DINKY-DIDO!

Now wasn't that easy? Don't tell me you're not dying to try it. What is this - an anniversary party or a funeral? Let's live a little. Don't let him talk you out of it, Grandma. That's better. Are we ready?

ARTIE/BAND: DO IT IN A CIRCLE.
DO IT IN A LINE.

ARTIE: MAKE LIKE A SNAKE
AND OSCILLATE YOUR SPINE

ARTIE/BAND: IF YOU'RE YOUNG OR OLD,
SKINNY OR FAT,
THE DINKY-DIDO DANCE
IS WHERE IT'S AT.

ARTIE: ROLL AROUND YOUR NOGGIN,
STICK OUT YOUR TONGUE,
MAKE A FUNNY NOISE -

ARTIE
B-B-B-B-BE YOUNG!

BUDDY
Nya nya!

LENNY
Blah!

DREW
Prrrraph!

ARTIE: DON'T BE SO EMBARRASSED -
THESE ARE FRIENDS YOU'RE AMONG,
AND YOU'RE DOIN' THE DINK,
DOIN' THE DINK,
THE INKA-DINKA DINKY DIDO.

(As lighting fades over all but ARTIE)

BAND

DO THE DINK, DINK
DINKY DIDO...

DO THE DINK, DINK
DINKY DIDO...

DO THE DINK, DINK
DINKY DIDO...

DO THE DINK.

ARTIE

(With increasing intensity)

Now I want everybody to get up
and do the Dinky-Dido...

Now I want everybody to get up
and do the Dinky-Dido...

Now I want everybody to get up
and do the Dinky-Dido!

Now I want everybody to get up
and do the Dinky-Dido!

The stage is now dark except for a spot on ARTIE, who freezes like a cornered animal, moving only his eyes and head.

Cross-fade to SHEILA and BRUNO's apartment.

Act I, Scene 11

Sheila and Bruno's living room.

SHEILA is trying on a garish red-sequined evening gown.

Bruno...

SHEILA

(Offstage)
Sheila?

BRUNO

Could you come in here a minute?

SHEILA

What's wrong, honey?

BRUNO

There's something I want to show you.

SHEILA

Just a moment, dear.

BRUNO

SHEILA makes adjustments on her gown.

Bruno...

SHEILA

Sheila?

BRUNO

Remember you said I should get more involved in the wedding?

SHEILA

Let's not start, honey.

BRUNO

I've decided you're right. From now on, I'm going to take on a more active role.

SHEILA

Enter BRUNO, buttoning his shirt.

That's wonderful! You won't regret it, you'll see. You might even decide to become part of... *(Appalled)*
What's that?

BRUNO

Like it? It's for the wedding.

SHEILA

That's not what we said you'd wear.

BRUNO

Relax, Bruno. It'll only be for a little while.

SHEILA

Which little while?

BRUNO

I've had an inspiration.

SHEILA

(Warily)
An inspiration?

BRUNO

To sing.

SHEILA

Let's leave the music to the professionals.

BRUNO

What am I?

SHEILA

You know what I mean.

BRUNO

It's a production, Bruno. Why can't I have my little moment in it?

SHEILA

You do have your moment. Our duet at the altar.

BRUNO

If you can use the wedding to promote your business, why can't I use it to promote my act?

SHEILA

Our business is selling theme parties. Our theme is a picnic in the Bavarian Alps. Your lounge act is not Bavarian.

BRUNO

I'm not doing my lounge act. I'm doing material I like for a change.

SHEILA

Which material?

BRUNO

SHEILA

My material. (*BRUNO groans.*) I'm even working on a new song especially for...

BRUNO

Honey, you have to make contact with four hundred couples.

SHEILA

I can do that better with a song than I can on a receiving line.

MUSIC.

BRUNO

I have to get to the place.

He begins to exit.

SHEILA

(Sternly)

Bruno...

He stops.

I'M GOING TO SING
AT OUR WEDDING,
IN HONOR OF BECOMING
YOUR WIFE.
I'M GOING TO LIFT
MY VOICE IN SONG
ON THE HAPPIEST DAY
OF MY LIFE.

BRUNO: Sheila, I'm late...

SHEILA: (*Blocking his way*)
I'M GOING TO SING
AT OUR WEDDING.
MY REPERTOIRE WILL PAINT
A TABLEAU
OF THE JOY AND THE BLISS
WE'LL BE SHARING
ON THE HAPPIEST DAY
WE'LL EVER KNOW.

BRUNO: (*Trying to get past her*)
Can we discuss this when I get back?

SHEILA: Stay put, Bruno, or I'll pop you.

(SHEILA, cont'd.)

A WEDDING NIGHT IS MEANT
FOR REJOICING.

BRUNO: This is business, Sheila...

SHEILA: NOT ONLY FOR THE GUESTS
BUT FOR THE GROOM
AND FOR THE BRIDE.

BRUNO: Dear...

SHEILA: THERE'S NOTHING WRONG
WITH ONE OF US VOICING
THE UNDYING LOVE
WE'LL BE FEELING INSIDE.

BRUNO: *(Trying to get past her)*
It isn't up to me, Sheila...

SHEILA: *(Holding him by the arm)*
I'M GOING TO SING
AT OUR WEDDING
TO CELEBRATE BECOMING
YOUR WIFE.
WITH DINNER.
A SET.
MAYBE FORTY FIVE MINUTES,
ON THE HAPPIEST DAY
OF MY LIFE.

BRUNO: *(Breaking free of her grip)*
I'll ask my mother.

He exits, slamming the door behind him.

SHEILA: *(To the door)*
THE HAPPIEST GODDAM DAY
OF MY LIFE.

Cross-fade to RED's office.

Act 1, Scene 12

Red's office.

Transition: "Dinky-Dido" vamp overlaid with "All For You." Special on ARTIE as he enters, panicky. Lights rise over RED's office. ARTIE stops across the desk from RED, who drinks and smokes.

I need your advice.

ARTIE

What kind of advice?

RED

An offer I got.

ARTIE

What kind of an offer?

RED

A tour. With the Gigolos.

ARTIE

What kind of a tour?

RED

Three months starting April.

ARTIE

Weddin' season!

RED

You'll find a replacement.

ARTIE

Artie, our clients don't book us to get a replacement.

RED

It won't be the first time you slip one by.

ARTIE

Slip one by!

RED

I can't pass this up, Pop.

ARTIE

What kind of money?

RED

An advance.

ARTIE

What kind of advance?

RED

For signing. Of course, once the record company takes out expenses for the record, the tour, promotion, split five ways...

ARTIE

Artie, you wanted advice, here's advice. You're young. You got a business. Build. Make money. When there's cash in the bank you can think about a tour but til then...

RED

I've made up my mind.

ARTIE

Then what're you askin' advice?

RED

I was hoping you'd tell me to jump at it.

ARTIE

Jump? You're talkin' three months bookings! You wanna put me out of business?

RED

Lenny knows the arrangements.

ARTIE

Lenny ain't a front man.

RED

Go to the union.

ARTIE

Union!

RED

Give somebody else a shot.

ARTIE

What about the Mandelbaum affair?

RED

What about it?

ARTIE

Artie, you're my key man - how do I nail this account without you?

RED

How do you keep it without me?

ARTIE

He starts to leave.

Get back here!

RED

MUSIC. ARTIE stops.

You're killin' me, Artie...

ARTIE

Calm down.

RED

Calm down!

**AFTER ALL I'VE DONE FOR YOU,
YOU'RE GONNA DUCK OUT?**

This is my year you're talkin' about.

ARTIE: Three months!

RED: AFTER ALL I'VE DONE,
YOU PACK IT UP AND GO?

I live for those three months!

ARTIE: Take it easy...

RED: I'M YOUR FATHER,
NOT SOME SCHMUCK YOU CHUCK OUT.

ARTIE: Dad, it's not so bad...

RED: AFTER ALL, I TAUGHT YOU
EVERYTHING YOU KNOW.

Can't this wait til after...

ARTIE: I can't ask the Gigolos to wait while I...

RED: To hell with your Gigolos! Look at who you're talkin' to!

**AFTER ALL THIS TIME,
YOU'RE READY TO DESERT ME?
I GET YOU IN SHAPE -
YOU LEAVE ME FLAT?**

(RED, cont'd.)

AFTER ALL I'VE DONE FOR YOU,
YOU HURT ME?
WE'RE A FAMILY -
I'M MORE TO YOU THAN THAT.

THIS IS IT, KID.
AFTER ALL THESE YEARS
WE FIN'LY GET THE BREAK.
HOW CAN YOU QUIT, KID?
WE GOT A GOLD MINE HERE,
AND IT'S BEGGIN' US TO TAKE IT,
THIS IS IT, KID.
AFTER ALL I'VE DONE FOR YOU,
YOU OWE ME.

RED turns his back. ARTIE turns him back around, gently.

ARTIE

AFTER ALL THIS TIME.
I'M OVERDUE, DAD.
WHY IS THIS SO HARD FOR YOU TO SEE?
AFTER ALL, I'VE DONE MY BIT FOR YOU, DAD.
AFTER ALL THIS TIME, IT'S TIME I DO FOR ME.

THIS IS IT, DAD.
I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR THIS MOMENT
TO ARRIVE SINCE WHO-KNOWS-WHEN.
THIS IS THE SHIT, DAD!
AN OPPORTUNITY LIKE THIS MAY NEVER
COME TO ME AGAIN.
THIS IS IT, DAD.
AFTER ALL I'VE DONE FOR YOU,
DON'T SNOW ME.

RED: SHAME ON YOU--
ARTIE: Shame on who?
RED: MAKIN' A BREAK
AFTER I STAKE MY
NAME ON YOU.
ARTIE: Shame on you!
RED: YOU GOT A NERVE,
AND YOU DESERVE THE
BLAME ON YOU.
ARTIE: You're blaming, too?
RED: THIS IS YOUR BLOOD,
YOU PIECE OF CRUD!

RED
AFTER ALL I'VE DONE,
YOU OWE ME MORE THAN THAT.

ARTIE
DON'T SNOW ME.
CAN'T THROW ME.
YOU OWE ME MORE THAN THAT

RED: THIS IS IT, KID.
YOU EITHER DO WHAT'S RIGHT BY ME
OR GO TO HELL.

ARTIE: I DID MY BIT, KID.
AND I'M NOT BUYIN' ANY MORE
OF THE BULLSHIT YOU'VE BEEN SELLIN'.

BOTH: THIS IS IT, KID.
IF YOU CARE ONE CRAP,
IT'S TIME YOU SHOW ME.

RED
SHAME ON YOU.

MAKIN' A BREAK
AFTER I STAKE MY
NAME ON YOU.

YOU GOT A NERVE,
AND YOU DESERVE THE
BLAME ON YOU.

ARTIE
AFTER ALL THIS TIME, I'M
OVERDUE, DAD.

*(MY HEART IS BREAKIN'
FOR YOU.)*

WHY IS THIS SO HARD
FOR YOU TO SEE?

*(MY NERVE IS SHAKIN'
FOR YOU.)*

AFTER ALL, I'VE DONE MY
PART FOR YOU, DAD.

RED: IF YOU PACK OUT DON'T COME BACK
ARTIE: RIGHT ON.

RED: YOU'RE A BUM.

ARTIE: YOU'RE A BOMB.

RED: TAKE A HIKE.

ARTIE: I'M GONE.

BOTH: I DON'T NEED YOUR HELP
TO MAKE MY RUN.

ARTIE: AT MY PLACE IN THE WORLD.

RED: AT MY PLACE IN THE SUN.

BOTH: AFTER ALL IS SAID AND DONE,
YOU'RE TALKIN' THROUGH YOUR HAT.
AFTER ALL I'VE DONE
YOU OWE ME MORE THAN THAT.

Exit ARTIE.

END ACT I

Act II, Scene 1

The Exchange Floor at Local 802.

An shabby room furnished with a bare bulletin board, battered spinet, desk with a microphone on it, table, chairs, wastepaper basket, etc. This space is occupied by the members of the Orchestra, who chat, smoke, eat lunches out of bags and generally look idle.

The BASS PLAYER, who's been polishing his instrument, improvises a bass line. This intrigues the KEYBOARD PLAYER, who ambles over to the spinet and improvises a vamp. The DRUMMER turns the wastepaper basket upside down, produces a pair of drumsticks and joins in.

MUSICIANS: THIS IS OUR PLACE -
LOCAL 802 -
WHERE THOSE WHO PLAY
AND THOSE WHO PAY
CAN RENDEZ-VOUS.

TRUMPET/CLARINET: WHEN OUR DAYS ARE EMPTY -
SAX/GUITAR: WHEN WE AREN'T EMPLOYED -
MUSICIANS: WHERE WE CAN FILL UP THE VOID.

THIS IS THE SPECIAL SPACE
WE CALL HOME BASE.
THIS IS WHERE WE MUDDLE THROUGH.
LOCAL 802.

GUITAR: HOW WAS YOUR WEEK, MAN?
TRUMPET: WEAK.
SAX: WEAK.
CLARINET: WEAK, MAN.
TRUMPET: BARREN.
SAX: GRIM.
TRUMPET: GLOOMY.
CLARINET: IT WAS BLEAK, MAN.

TRUMPET: I BACKED A COMIC
IN A SLEAZY SALOON.
SAX: I BACKED A STRIPPER
WITH AN ASS LIKE A PRUNE.
GUITAR: I PLAYED THE SUBWAY.
CLARINET: DID YOU GET A GOOD LOCATION?
GUITAR: YEAH - THE RAMP TO THE SHUTTLE
AT GRAND CENTRAL STATION.

CLARINET: I PLAYED SCALES
TIL MY FACE TURNED BLUE 'N'
SO I FIGURED I'D COME DOWN TO SEE
IF ANYTHING'S DOIN'.

TRUMPET: ANYTHING DOIN'?
CLARINET: WHAT DO YOU THINK?
SAX: LET'S GO FIND A PLACE
WHERE WE CAN DRINK.

GUITAR: Wait!
I'M GONNA HANG OUT
A LITTLE BIT MORE.

SAX: Why?

GUITAR: SOMETHING MAY TURN UP.
SOMETHING MAY...

SAX: SURE -
THE MESSIAH MAY COME DOWN
AND WALK THROUGH THAT DOOR
AND REDEEM US BECAUSE WE BELONG

MUSICIANS: TO LOCAL 802.

THIS IS OUR PLACE.
THIS IS OUR PLACE.
LOCAL 802.
THE PLACE THAT HELPS THE PRO MUSICIAN
DO WHAT WE MUST DO.

*Enter MORTY MANN, wearing a white suit and carrying a fat
loose-leaf binder.*

KEYBOARD

Hey fellas - look! It's Morty!

*The MUSICIANS eagerly move in a body to MORTY,
surrounding him.*

MORTY

Hello, boys! Great to see you all lookin' happy and hungry...

DRUM

Got any work for a drummer?

Got any work for a keyboard man?

KEYBOARD

What about a clarinet?

CLARINET

What about a guitar player?

GUITAR

Hold it boys, hold it, I got plenty of work here. Give me a chance to look in the book.

MORTY

The MUSICIANS fall into line, like an Army platoon presenting itself for inspection. MORTY looks in his book.

I need a drummer.

DRUM

I'm a drummer!

MORTY

(Handing him a slip of paper)

Lopez. Rego Park. Black tie. *(Looks in book)* I need a guitar...

GUITAR

Me! Me! Me!

MORTY

(Handing him a slip of paper)

Vitucci. Cos Cob. Dress optional. *(Looks in book)* I need keyboards.

KEYBOARD

I play keyboards!

MORTY

Got an accordion?

KEYBOARD

I can borrow one.

MORTY

Can you play it?

KEYBOARD

I can fake it.

MORTY

(Handing him a slip of paper)

Glogowski. Staten Island. Come-as-you-are.

CLARINET

What about a clarinet? Anything in there for a clarinet?

MORTY

(Looks over list)

Sorry, kid - no clarinet.

CLARINET

You're sure?

MORTY

(Shutting book)

Tell you the truth, outside of my set guys I don't get much call for reeds these days.

CLARINET

(Disheartened)

Awww...

MORTY

Don't be discouraged. Let me give you some free advice...

Puts arm around his shoulder and takes him aside.

Reeds are a thing of the past, cause there's nothing you can do on one that a good keyboard man can't do better on a synthesizer.

Enter RED, with briefcase.

CLARINET

You really think so?

MORTY

I know so. Learn a new instrument.

CLARINET, despondent, goes to the table and sits on one of the chairs. MORTY joins RED.

MORTY

I hear you made a visit to our friend.

RED

I hear you and her ain't so friendly anymore.

MORTY

I hear she made you a proposition.

RED

You hear good.

MORTY

Glad to hear it. I feel a whole lot better knowin' Frances wants the best for my son.

RED

I feel better hearin' you fin'ly admit it.

He joins the group of musicians.

I need a clarinet! Anybody here play the clarinet? I need a clarinet player for Saturday night. Anybody here play...

CLARINET

(Snapping out of his doldrums)

I play clarinet!

RED

(Handing him a slip of paper)

Abracadabra Manor. Belt Parkway. Call my office, ask for May. She'll give you the (information)...

MORTY

(Opening his notebook)

I need a clarinet player! Anybody here play (clarinet)?

CLARINET

You just said you didn't have any gigs.

MORTY

You'll be savin' my life, kid. *(To RED)* Reed men are a bitch to find these days, ain't they Red? *(To CLARINET)* Testimonial. Plaza Hotel. Saturday night. White shirt.

CLARINET

(Haughtily)

I already have a booking Saturday.

MORTY

Too bad. This job is double scale.

CLARINET

I may be able to break it.

RED

Break it, you'll never work for me again.

MORTY

Don't break it, you won't work for him again anyway.

CLARINET

(To ORCHESTRA)

Help me, fellas. What should I do?

(To RED)
Get a load of who he's askin'!

MORTY

It's an ethical dilemma!

CLARINET

MORTY
Hey kid, you want ethical, ask me. I can tell you all you need to know about ethical.

WHEN I WAS A YOUNG MAN
JUST LIKE YOUSE,
WITH RAGGEDY SLACKS
AND HOLES IN MY SHOES,
I BLEW ON MY FLUGELHORN
TIL I'D DROP
CAUSE I BELIEVED THAT SOMEDAY
I'D BE REACHIN' THE TOP.

NOW I'M THE BIGGEST IN THE BUSINESS.
THE HEAD OF THE CLASS,
WITH EVERY PLAYER IN THE CITY
KISSIN' MY ASS.
I'M THE BIGGEST IN THE BUSINESS.
YOU THINK THAT'S CRASS?
I DO WHAT I LIKE,
I LIKE WHAT I DO
AND IF YOU KEEP YOURSELF IN LINE
I'LL MAYBE DO IT FOR YOU.
STICK WITH ME,
YOU'LL BE STUCK LIKE GLUE.
CAUSE I'M THE BIGGEST IN THE BUSINESS.

MUSICIANS: THE BIGGEST IN THE BUSINESS!
THE BIGGEST IN THE BUSINESS!

MORTY: WHEN I HIT MY TWENNIES
I UNDERSTOOD
THAT I ALREADY GOT TO BE ABOUT
AS GOOD AS I COULD.
SO I SAYS TO MYSELF,
"MORTY, THIS AIN'T THE WAY.
IT DON'T MEAN A THING
IF YOU CANT MAKE IT PAY."

NOW I'M THE BIGGEST IN THE BUSINESS.
THE BEST IN THE TRADE.
YOU'RE GOOD ENOUGH TO WORK FOR ME,
YOU GOT IT MADE

(MORTY, cont'd.)

CAUSE I'M THE BIGGEST IN THE BUSINESS.
YOU LIKE GETTIN' PAID?

I LEAVE IT TO YOU -
DECIDE ON A PLAN.
YOU CAN PUT YOURSELF IN IDLE
AND SIT ON YOUR CAN,
OR GET IT BACK IN GEAR
AND WORK FOR MORTIMER MANN.
I'M THE BIGGEST IN THE BUSINESS.

MUSICIANS: THE BIGGEST IN THE BUSINESS!
THE BIGGEST IN THE BUSINESS!

MORTY: SOME PEOPLE SAY THAT I'M GREEDY.

MUSICIANS: No!

MORTY: SOME PEOPLE SAY I'M A BEAST OF PREY.

MUSICIANS: You? (Naw...!)

MORTY: SOME PEOPLE SAY THAT I'M SEEDY.

MUSICIANS: Seedy!

MORTY: SOME LITTLE PEOPLE SIT AND DIDDLE ALL DAY.

(To CLARINET)

How about it, kid? You gonna diddle or fiddle? You want the job or don't you?

CLARINET: Hmm...

MUSICIANS: HE'S THE BIGGEST IN THE BUSINESS

MORT: *(Smiling, to RED, who fumes)*
I got plenty of work for everyone, Red. And plenty of players if you need
help bookin' my son's wedding.

RED: Aww....

MUSICIANS: HE'S THE BIGGEST IN THE BUSINESS

MORTY: *(To CLARINET)*
Well?

CLARINET *(Anxiously)*
Gee, I don't know, I already promised him, but
you're so big, and I...

MUSICIANS
BIGGEST IN THE BUSINESS
BIGGEST IN THE BUSINESS

The MUSICIANS lift MORTY onto their shoulders. RED exits, furious.

MUSICIANS

(Lifting MORTY onto their shoulders)

HE'S THE BIGGEST IN THE BUSINESS -
PRAISE THE LORD!
IF HE OFFERS YOU A RIDE
YOU BETTER HOP ON BOARD
CAUSE HE'S THE BIGGEST IN THE BUSINESS
AND HE CAN'T BE IGNORED.

MORTY: YOU CAN WORK ON YOUR OWN
AND DREAM OF THE TOP,
OR COME TO WORK FOR ME
AND BE THE CREAM OF THE CROP.

MUSICIANS: ONCE YOU START WITH MORTY,
YOU NEVER STOP.

MORTY: CAUSE I'M THE BIGGEST IN THE...

MUSICIANS: HE'S THE BIGGEST IN THE...

MORTY: I'M THE BIGGEST IN THE BUSINESS.

MORTY/MUSICANS: THE BIGGER THE BETTER,
THE BETTER THE BIGGER,
THE BIGGEST IN THE BUSINESS.

RED: *(Offstage)*
B-bottom-bah!

Exit MUSICIANS and MORTY, who waves magisterially at RED.

Cross-fade to SHEILA's apartment.

Act II, Scene 2

Sheila and Bruno's apartment.

BRUNO is dressing. SHEILA follows him around, agitated.

This wasn't the deal.

SHEILA

You'll have to adjust.

BRUNO

It isn't enough.

SHEILA

It's more than enough.

BRUNO

I can't cut a forty five minute act down to fifteen minutes at the last...

SHEILA

Fifteen minutes is all we can bear.

BRUNO

Bear!

SHEILA

Spare.

BRUNO

He'll be here any second!

SHEILA

Fifteen minutes.

BRUNO

The doorbell rings.

And no red dress.

SHEILA

I'll get even with you for this!

BRUNO opens the door. Enter ARTIE, carrying a bottle of wine and a bouquet.

Hello hello!

ARTIE

BRUNO

Come in, come in!

ARTIE

This is for the dinner and this is for the hostess.

BRUNO

Take them, Sheila. Give me your coat.

SHEILA snatches the gifts from ARTIE and carelessly drops them onto the bureau. BRUNO hangs ARTIE's coat in the hall closet and brings out his own coat.

ARTIE

This is a very large apartment for Howard Beach. Compared to where I live it's...leaving so soon?

BRUNO

If you need me I'll be at the Manor taking care of business.

ARTIE

Busy busy busy!

BRUNO

I don't mind telling you that's where you should be too. It doesn't make sense to discuss the music with your father when you're the one who's going to be up there.

ARTIE

My father?

SHEILA

(Through her teeth)

We have things to do, Bruno.

BRUNO

Of course. As far as I'm concerned, the sooner you do it the better. *(To SHEILA)* I'll be back at eleven, dear. Give or take fifteen minutes.

Exit BRUNO.

ARTIE

Nice fella you're husband.

SHEILA

(Brooding)

We're not married yet.

(PAUSE)

ARTIE

Why don't you have a seat, Artie? Thanks. Where? Try the sofa. Thanks again. *(He sits.)* Smells good what you're cooking.

SHEILA

We ordered in Chinese.

ARTIE

I hope it's something that goes with red wine.

SHEILA

(Tearfully)

I'm not hungry. Let's get to work.

She takes a pile of music out of the piano bench and sits next to ARTIE.

I had my show all figured out but Bruno decided I should only do fifteen minutes and I haven't had a chance yet to... *(She sobs.)*

ARTIE

It's all right, Sheila. If it's only fifteen minutes, we'll make it the best fifteen minutes of the night.

SHEILA

You think we can?

ARTIE

Don't worry.

SHEILA

(Smiles)

I'm glad you're going to be there, Artie.

ARTIE

Actually, I'm *not* going to be there. I quit.

SHEILA

(Weakly)

Quit?

ARTIE

My job. Club dates. I've decided to go with the Gigolos.

SHEILA

(Disappointed)

That's wonderful.

ARTIE

That won't keep us from doing what we're here to do tonight.

SHEILA

Thanks.

ARTIE

Don't thank me. I don't think I'd've made this move if you didn't encourage me.

SHEILA

What are friends for? *(Stands)* We should open up that wine and celebrate.

She goes to the bureau and takes two glasses and a corkscrew out of a drawer.

ARTIE

Are you nervous about the wedding?

SHEILA

(Opening wine bottle)
Why should I be nervous? It's just another gig.

ARTIE

I mean are you excited about getting married?

SHEILA

We're together seven years, Artie.

ARTIE

This doesn't sound like a woman on the eve of the happiest day of her life.

SHEILA

(Pouring)
The only thing that's changing is Bruno's tax status.

ARTIE

Then why do it?

SHEILA

(Returning with wine)
Because Bruno thinks it's time we settled.

ARTIE

And you?

SHEILA

I guess he's right. Relationships have to grow or they wither. *(She drains her glass.)* Don't you think?

ARTIE

I wouldn't know.

SHEILA

What about you? Isn't there someone you'd like to...

I'm not ready to settle.

ARTIE

Not ready?

SHEILA

As ARTIE speaks, SHEILA pours more wine.

ARTIE
All these years I've been working for my father, I've always felt kind of - temporary? I know it sounds stupid, but if you're not really sure who you are, how can you commit to another person?

(Drinks second glass.)
It doesn't sound stupid.

SHEILA

Anyway, I haven't met the right woman.

ARTIE

The right woman?

SHEILA

Someone who understands that it takes some people longer to get started than others.

ARTIE

Isn't it lonely going through life not having someone?

SHEILA

It's not so bad.

ARTIE

STAYING SINGLE
PLAYING SOLO
SINGLE MINDED
RESOLUTE
WITH NO OTHER
TO DEPEND ON
NO DISTRACTION
NO DISPUTE

STAYING SINGLE
CIRCULATING
BRIEF ENCOUNTERS
ONE NIGHT STANDS

WITH NO OTHER
TO DEPEND ON
NO INTRUSIONS
NO DEMANDS

(ARTIE, cont'd)

OTHER MEN I KNOW WHO
CAME OF AGE
AT THE TIME I DID
FOUND CAREERS AND STARTED
FAMILIES.
NOT THIS MAN.
HE'S STILL A KID.

COUPLES NEED THEIR
SETS OF CHINA.
I JUST NEED
A PAPER PLATE.
COUPLES NEED THEIR
TIME ALONE.
I'M ALONE,
DOING GREAT.

STAYING SINGLE.
STAYING SEPARATE.
UNCONNECTED.
LIVING FREE.
WITH NO OTHER
TO DEPEND ON.
NO ONE TO DEPEND ON ME.

SHEILA kisses ARTIE.

ARTIE

Why did you do that?

SHEILA

Because it takes some people longer to get started than others.

Pause. ARTIE kisses SHEILA. They embrace and sink into the sofa.

Cross-fade to Scene 3

Act II, Scene 3
The Abracadabra Manor.

RED, FRANCES, BRUNO and MAY are seated around a bare plywood table. MAY takes notes.

What else? **RED**

Suits. **MAY**

Bruno? **FRANCES**

White. Virginal. Pure. Unsullied. **BRUNO**

Dinner jackets. *(MAY writes.)* What else? **RED**

Shirts. **MAY**

Bruno? **FRANCES**

Pink. Elegant. Delicate. Subtle. **BRUNO**

Sissy shirts. *(MAY writes.)* What else? **RED**

The theme... **FRANCES**

A picnic in Bavaria. **BRUNO**

Rodgers and Hammerstein. **RED**

Bavarian waltzes. Pastoral. Playful. Pristine. **BRUNO**

Barbarian waltzes. *(MAY writes.)* What else? **RED**

You tell me. What are your plans for the rest of the evening? **FRANCES**

RED

For the preheat, when the people are havin' their smorgasbord, we'll go with light jazz.

MAY

Light jazz...

BRUNO

Light rock.

RED

People wanna schmooze when they get to a party, Bruno.

BRUNO

Light rock, no vocals.

MAY

(Writing)
No vocals...

RED

After the ceremony, I got some big band dance arrangements...

BRUNO

Boogie music.

MAY

Boogie-woogie...

BRUNO

Just the boogie.

FRANCES

To warm up the crowd.

RED

To warm 'em up, right. Then, when the bride and groom make their entrance, we announce the first dance.

FRANCES

(Firmly)
No first dance.

RED

How do you make a wedding without the first dance?

FRANCES

People expect the parents to get up for the first dance. I had my last dance with Morty ages ago.

MAY

No first dance...

Next, we do (the)... **RED**

Bavarian songspiel. With dinner. **BRUNO**

Followed by Sheila's... **FRANCES**

Event. And then it's back to rock 'n' roll. **BRUNO**

What about standards? **RED**

The highest, of course. **BRUNO**

FRANCES
He means the old music, dear. People want to feel young at a party, Red. That stuff can wait til the end, when the guests are drunk and sentimental.

What else? **RED**

A question. Artie... **FRANCES**

What about him? **RED**

He'll be there? **FRANCES**

Don't worry about Artie. **RED**

He isn't here. **FRANCES**

It's all right, Mom. He's home with Sheila, checking out her set. **BRUNO**

What else? **RED**

(To FRANCES)
Have we overlooked anything? **BRUNO**

Chapel music?

MAY

Ah! A soprano.

BRUNO

Someone who's warm.

FRANCES

Childlike.

BRUNO

Earthy.

FRANCES

Sincere.

BRUNO

Wholesome.

FRANCES

Pleasant.

BRUNO

Sweet, like May.

FRANCES

MAY, who has progressively perked with each adjective, looks hopefully at RED.

Get Suzie Wein.

RED

Red!

MAY

(To BRUNO)

Where's the bandstand?

RED

This way.

BRUNO

(Standing)

Let's take a look.

RED

Exit RED and BRUNO.

FRANCES

Are you a singer?

MAY

I'm a good singer, only he never lets me...

FRANCES

He was the same way when I was with him.

MAY

I'm not "with" Red, Mrs. Mandelbaum. I only work for him.

FRANCES

You think so?

MAY

Though sometimes I wonder why he keeps me around. It's not as if we have a busy office.

FRANCES

Why do you stay with him if he won't let you sing?

MAY

I don't know. With Red, it's like you're in the family. He expects you to let him count on you, but he also expects you to count on him.

FRANCES

I know.

MAY

I kind of like that. So whenever I wonder why I should stay, the next thing I wonder is why I should leave.

FRANCES

I know.

MAY

Cause if not letting me sing is the worst thing about him, how bad can he be? Anyway, he promised some day he'll let me.

FRANCES

You think he'll keep that promise?

MAY

I don't know, Mrs. Mandelbaum. Maybe he won't.

FRANCES

Maybe he will.

Act II, Scene 4

Sheila and Bruno's apartment

ARTIE and SHEILA are asleep in each other's arms under a comforter. SHEILA awakens.

SHEILA

Oh, my God! *(Shuts her eyes.)* I didn't do this. *(Opening her eyes, sitting up)* I couldn't have. I'm getting married tomorrow. *(ARTIE makes a contented sound.)* Oh, my God! *(Shaking ARTIE)* Artie...

ARTIE

Huh?

SHEILA

Artie, wake up.

ARTIE

Huh?

SHEILA

Get dressed.

ARTIE

Good morning.

SHEILA

It isn't morning. It's...

She searches for the alarm clock.

ARTIE

Kiss me.

SHEILA

(Finding the clock)
...eleven, Christ, he'll be here any minute!

She leaps out of bed.

ARTIE

Was it good for you, Sheila?

SHEILA

Get dressed, damn you!

ARTIE

It was wonderful for me.

SHEILA

(Throwing his pants at him)
Shut up and move!

ARTIE

(Pulling on his pants)
I have to say I'm surprised at myself. I know you hear all kinds of stories about musicians, but...

SHEILA

Can't you dress any faster than that?

ARTIE

I'm doing the best I can, Sheila.

SHEILA

Maybe you should finish outside.

ARTIE

Won't that look great if I run into Bruno?

SHEILA

(Covering sofa with comforter, panicky)
You're right. All right, finish here. Comb your hair. Spread out those lead sheets so it looks like we're working. Hurry!

ARTIE

I am hurrying. Calm down, Sheila.

SHEILA

You're right. We've got to be calm. We've got to be cool.

WE'VE GOT TO BE MATURE ABOUT IT --
KEEP IT IN PERSPECTIVE.
THIS IS ONE OF THOSE GROWN-UP THINGS
THAT HAPPENS TO GROWN-UP PEOPLE.

WE WON'T BE INSECURE ABOUT IT
IF WE STAY OBJECTIVE.
WE'VE GOT TO BE HONEST WITH OURSELVES
AND FACE UP TO WHAT WE'VE DONE.

ARTIE: And what do you think we've done?

SHEILA: NOTHING.

ARTIE: Nothing!

SHEILA: NOTHING HAPPENED.

ARTIE: That's not true...

SHEILA: NOTHING -
NOT A THING AT ALL.

ARTIE: Where were you?

SHEILA: TOO MUCH WINE.
TOO MUCH EXCITEMENT.
WE'LL BE FINE
KNOWING TONIGHT MEANT
NOTHING.

ARTIE: Wait a minute...

SHEILA: NOTHING HAPPENED!

ARTIE: How can you call what happened nothing when you and I not a minute ago were...

SHEILA: DON'T FLATTER YOURSELF INTO THINKING
THAT THIS SLIP-UP WAS A PLAN.
IT WAS NOTHING BUT AN ACCIDENT.

ARTIE: AN ACCIDENT THAT YOU BEGAN.

SHEILA: NOTHING!

ARTIE: It's all right...

SHEILA: NOTHING HAPPENED.

ARTIE: Aw, Sheila, c'mere...

SHEILA: *(Throwing a sweater at him)*
YOU BETTER DRESS NOW...
(ARTIE picks it up.)
NO, WAIT. THAT SWEATER IS HIS.
(He drops it.)
THE ROOM IS A MESS NOW...
(She picks up the sweater.)
STOP MAKING IT WORSE THAN IT IS.

YOU BETTER LEAVE NOW.
YOU BETTER MAKE USE OF THE DOOR.
I THINK I MAY HEAVE NOW...
I FEEL LIKE A LITTLE WHORE.

ARTIE: But Sheila...

SHEILA: *(To herself)*
NOTHING HAPPENED.

ARTIE: Sheila...

SHEILA: NOTHING!

ARTIE: BUT SHEILA,
SOMETHING WONDERFUL HAPPENED.
SOMETHING GOOD AND BEAUTIFUL
AND REAL.

SOMETHING YOU ARE NOT GONNA BURY
OR UNDO. YOU SHOULD BE VERY
HAPPY.
HAPPY THAT IT HAPPENED.

SHEILA: Nothing happened!

ARTIE: SOMETHING THAT WAS MEANT TO HAPPEN
HAPPENED.

SHEILA: All right, okay, something did happen. Now what?

ARTIE: You can't go through with the wedding.

SHEILA: You're insane.

ARTIE: There's still time to call it off.

SHEILA: Go splash cold water on your face.

ARTIE: Sheila, you just said we have to face up to what we've...

SHEILA: Artie, listen to me:

FLIPPING THROUGHT THE PICTURES
DOESN'T MEAN YOU'VE READ THE BOOK.

ARTIE: BUT IT COULD CONVINCEN YOU
THAT YOU OUGHT TO
ONCE YOU'VE HAD A LOOK.

SHEILA: DOING A GREAT AUDITION
DOESN'T MEAN YOU GOT THE LEAD.

ARTIE: BUT IT MIGHT MAKE SOME DIRECTORS
RECONSIDER WHAT THEY NEED.

SHEILA: YOU DON'T QUIT YOUR JOB
IF YOU SIMPLY NEED A REST.

ARTIE: BUT YOU LOOK FOR SOMETHING ELSE
IF IT'S A JOB THAT YOU DETEST.

SHEILA: YOU DON'T JUMP OUT THE WINDOW
CAUSE YOU THINK YOU'D LIKE TO FLY.

ARTIE: BUT IF YOUR HOUSE IS BURNING DOWN,
IT MIGHT BE WORTH A TRY.

SHEILA: NOTHING HAPPENED.

ARTIE: SOMETHING WONDERFUL...

SHEILA: NOTHING!

(SHEILA, cont'd.)

(Looking out window)

YOU BETTER TREK NOW.
I THINK THOSE HEADLIGHTS ARE HIS!
MY LIFE IS A WRECK NOW.
STOP MAKING IT WORSE THAN IT IS.

YOU'VE HAD YOUR FUN - GREAT.
FORGET THIS HAPPENED AT ALL.
YOU BETTER RUN - WAIT.
IS ANYONE OUT IN THE HALL?

ARTIE
TELL ME YOU LOVE HIM.
LET'S HEAR YOU SAY IT.
TELL ME YOU LOVE HIM
AND I'M ALREADY GONE.

SHEILA

Love?

Who?

Bruno?

TELL ME YOU LOVE HIM.
SPEAK OF THE WAY IT
CONSUMES YOU -
I'LL GLADLY MOVE ON.

Of course I lo... lo... lo... I mean,
naturally I... what kind of a ques...

SHEILA: Bruno happens to be very good to me!

ARTIE: TELL ME YOU LOVE HIM.

SHEILA: Bruno's smart...

ARTIE: WHY DON'T YOU SHOW IT?

SHEILA: Bruno's ambitious...

ARTIE: TELL ME YOU LOVE HIM...

SHEILA: And Bruno's, Bruno's, Bruno's...

ARTIE: ...BEYOND ANY DOUBT.

SHEILA: ...handsome.

ARTIE: HE'S WRONG FOR YOU, SHEILA...

SHEILA: Wrong!

ARTIE: WRONG AND YOU KNOW IT.

SHEILA: ARE YOU TELLING ME YOU THINK THAT
YOU'RE MISTER RIGHT?

ARTIE: MAYBE I AM.

SHEILA: GO FLY A KITE!

ARTIE: GIVE ME A...

SHEILA: SCRAM!

ARTIE: ...CHANCE TO FIND OUT.

ARTIE/SHEILA: Please...

ARTIE: GIVE ME A CHANCE TO FIND OUT.

I love you, Sheila.

SHEILA

(Quietly, opening the door to the apartment)
Please leave...

ARTIE

I think you love me too.

SHEILA

Forget this happened...

ARTIE

Sheila...

SHEILA

(Violently pushing him out, throwing his coat after him)
Get out! Join the Gigolos. Go on tour. You'll forget me in a week.

ARTIE

(His foot in the door)
All right, I'll go. But I won't forget.

SHEILA

That's your problem.

ARTIE

And I won't let you forget it either.

SHEILA

Goodbye!

ARTIE takes his foot out of the door. SHEILA slams it. Pause.

NOTHING.
NOTHING HAPPENED.
NOTHING...
GOD, I'M SICK OF MEN!

NOTHING REALLY HAPPENED.
NOTHING AT ALL,
AND I'LL NEVER LET IT HAPPEN
AGAIN.

ACT II, Scene 5

The Abracadabra Manor. Various locales:

- o **ENTRANCE** - *Glass doors; a cloak room counter; a small table bearing carefully arranged seating cards.*
- o **SMORGASBORD** - *A long table bearing grotesquely designed food.*
- o **BRIDAL CHAMBER** - *A soft pink room furnished with a dressing table and a day bed.*
- o **CHAPEL** - *Does not resemble a house of worship.*
- o **BANDSTAND** - *Entire Orchestra visible. Includes dance floor, dais and other adjoining tables.*

The action is continuous

I. ENTRANCE

Enter BRUNO wearing a raincoat over a tuxedo. He holds the door for FRANCES, who limps in followed by SHEILA. The women wear street clothes under their raincoats. ALL are in a foul mood.

FRANCES

See to it the boys salt the parking lot, Bruno. If this wasn't our place, I'd sue.

BRUNO

Want me to massage that for you, Mom?

FRANCES

Don't worry about my foot. Worry what this weather might do to our wedding.

BRUNO

And the business, if my prospects don't show.

SHEILA

And my show, if you can't pull in an audience.

BRUNO

I'll see how the help is doing.

SHEILA

I'll get into my costume for the ceremony.

FRANCES

Make sure you're back in time for the publicity photos.

Exit SHEILA and BRUNO. Enter RED and MAY. RED carries a briefcase.

(Effusively)
You look terrific.

RED

Save it for the gown. Where's Artie?

FRANCES

Don't worry about Artie.

RED

Why are you here?

FRANCES

Just makin' sure you're not disappointed.

RED

Enter MORTY and his bimbo GLORIA, who wears a loud corsage.

What's in the case, Bonano?

MORTY

Where do we set up for the preheat?

RED

(Pointing the way)
Through the portico to the Dolly Madison room, left at the Maharaja Rock Garden.

FRANCES

Exit RED and MAY. MORTY moves to the seating card table.

You're early.

FRANCES

I figure you maybe need help. Say hello to Gloria Rappaport.

MORTY

I've heard an awful lot about you.

GLORIA

And I've heard a lot awful about you.

FRANCES

(Finding his card, surprised)
You put us by the dais?

MORTY

FRANCES

The groom's father is supposed to sit at the dais.

GLORIA

That's so sweet of you!

FRANCES

I have to dress.

She begins to exit.

GLORIA

Mrs. Mandelbaum... (*FRANCES stops. Confidentially*) I know how hard it is for you to see your son's father here with another woman, and, well - I admire you for it. I hope we can be friends.

FRANCES

Thank you, Gloria. I'm touched.

She begins to leave, but GLORIA wants a hug. FRANCES patiently receives the gesture, suddenly wincing.

Watch the corsage pin, slut!

She limps off, massaging her chest. Cross-fade to

II. BRIDAL CHAMBER

SHEILA is putting on makeup. Her wedding gown and the red dress from Act I are visible. BRUNO paces.

BRUNO: YOU'RE MAKING A FOOL OF YOURSELF.

SHEILA: Am I?

BRUNO: YOU'RE MAKING A FOOL OF MY MOTHER.

SHEILA: Am I?

BRUNO: YOU'RE MAKING A FOOL OF ME.

SHEILA: Give yourself a little more credit, Bruno.

BRUNO: (*Picking up the red dress*)

This is supposed to be a picnic in Bavaria. No one wears a cheap dress like this in Bavaria. And those heels...

SHEILA: I couldn't find any jack boots to go with the dress, Bruno.

BRUNO: They make you wiggle!

SHEILA: That's the point.

BRUNO: Sheila...

SHEILA: I know. Nobody wiggles in Bavaria.

BRUNO: IF YOU LOVE ME THE WAY YOU SHOULD
YOU'LL TAKE MY ADVICE, FOR YOUR OWN GOOD,

SHEILA: Gawd -

BRUNO: PACK UP THE DRESS.

SHEILA: No.

BRUNO: PUT THE SHOES ON THE SHELF.

SHEILA: No!

BRUNO: IF YOU REALLY LOVE ME YOU'LL BEHAVE YOUR(SELF)...

SHEILA: I own fifteen minutes of this shinding, buster.

BRUNO: IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO CHANGE YOUR MIND.

SHEILA: I'M GOING TO SING AT OUR WEDDING!

BRUNO: IT'S CHEESY. CHEAP. IT'S UNREFINED.

SHEILA: THE ICE IS THIN WHERE YOU'RE TREADING.

BRUNO: FACE THE FACTS:
YOU'RE SECOND-RATE.
DO THE RIGHT THING -
IT'S NOT TOO LATE.

SHEILA: Bruno

BRUNO: Sheila?

SHEILA: Say another word and I'll pop you.

Cross-fade to

III. ENTRANCE

A trio plays light rock in the background. A PAGE BOY attends the table with the little cards on it, most of which have been removed.

A chic COUPLE enters from outside, followed by ARTIE, who wears a tuxedo.

MAN

(Handing PAGE BOY an invitation)

Mr. and Mrs. Engquist, please.

PAGE BOY

Family, friends or prospective client?

Clients

MAN

PAGE BOY
Table number twenty six. *(They exit.)* Family, friend or prospective client?

I'm with the band.

ARTIE

Can I see your invitation?

PAGE BOY

I said I'm with the band.

ARTIE

You're not with the band.

PAGE BOY

I'm the singer.

ARTIE

The members of the band are wearing *pink* shirts, sir. Can I see your invitation?

PAGE BOY

Cross-fade to

IV. SMORGASBORD

RED, holding a drink, dips a cracker into a pate' sculpture shaped like a milkmaid.

Easy on the vodka, Red. You got a job to do.

MORTY

Good advice. I'll think it over.

RED

You think my offer over?

MORTY

You think my answer over?

RED

(To GLORIA)
Can you believe I offer this schmuck a job he turns me down?

MORTY

GLORIA giggles.

(MORTY, cont'd.)

IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO CHANGE YOUR MIND.
YOU STILL GOT A FUTURE WITH ME.
GET AWAY FROM THIS GRIND!

RED: GET YOUR FACE REDESIGNED.

MORTY: ON THE OTHER HAND,
IT'S TOO LATE FOR YOU TO FIND
A FUTURE TO SUIT YA LIKE WE
WANT FOR YOU.

RED: YEAH - THE KIND WHERE I KISS YOUR BEHIND
ON COMMAND

MORTY: HOW MUCH MORE DO YOU THINK I CAN WAIT?
DO YOURSELF A FAVOR, KID -
IT'S NOT TOO LATE.

RED

Like you said, Morty - I got a job to do.

He exits. Cross-fade to

V. ENTRANCE

The PAGE BOY is still blocking ARTIE. A GUEST looks on.

ARTIE

I've got a job to do!

PAGE BOY

So do I. So I can't let you in without an invitation.

*Enter FRANCES, wearing an elegant gown, a bandage around
her ankle and a gauze pad taped to her chest.*

FRANCES

(To ARTIE)
Where have you been!

The PAGE BOY releases ARTIE and exits.

ARTIE

(Anxiously)
Did I miss the ceremony?

We're still having smorgasbord.

FRANCES

Thank God!

ARTIE

He starts off.

Artie. (*ARTIE stops.*) Smorgasbord is not for the musicians

FRANCES

Cross-fade to

VI. BRIDAL CHAMBER

SHEILA is finishing up her hair.

BRUNO: IT ISN'T ONLY THE DRESS, SHEILA.

SHEILA: Bruno...

BRUNO: IT ISN'T ONLY THE SHOES.

SHEILA: Bruno, I'm warning you...

BRUNO: IT ISN'T ONLY YOUR EAGERNESS
TO DISGRACE US ALL BY PARADING AROUND
THE STAGE LIKE A WHORE.

SHEILA: You're not supposed to be here, Bruno, it's bad luck.

BRUNO: WHAT BOTHERS ME IS YOUR ATTITUDE.

SHEILA: Bruno...

BRUNO: IF THIS IS YOUR ATTITUDE NOW...

SHEILA: Bruno...

BRUNO: ...WHAT CAN I EXPECT WHEN WE'RE MARRIED?

SHEILA: Bruno!

BRUNO: Sheila?

SHEILA: Say another syllable and I'll pop you.

Cross-fade to

VII. SMORGASBORD

RED and ARTIE at the cratered pate' sculpture.

RED

You came through for me, son. I won't forget it. Now get up there.

ARTIE

I'm not here to work.

RED

What the hell are you here for?

ARTIE

That's my business.

RED

Business? You went over the hill, remember?

ARTIE

I'm not here for the date.

RED

No? What's it, Gigolo business with your punk guitarist, Mr. Pop Star?

ARTIE

Calm down. *(Leaving)* I gotta get out of here.

RED

Now you're makin' sense!

Cross-fade to

VIII. BRIDAL CHAMBER

Except for the veil, SHEILA is completely dressed.

BRUNO

All right, Sheila. I'll be big about it.

SHEILA

Thank you.

BRUNO

We have to be cool when we walk into that chapel.

SHEILA

We do.

BRUNO

It's your wedding too - you have a right to enjoy it.

SHEILA

Thank you, darling. You're making me very happy.

BRUNO

(Exploding, after a beat)
It's *my* wedding!

SHEILA

Bruno!

BRUNO

I'm not going to let you sabotage my creation with your flaky, selfish, opportunistic...

The door crashes open. Enter ARTIE.

ARTIE

Sheila! *(Noticing BRUNO)* Oh. Hi. I...

BRUNO

Came to finish plotting with the bride, I know. Well, make it fast. She only has... *(Looks at watch.)*
Fifteen minutes! *(To SHEILA)* Happy? Our chapel routine is in fifteen minutes and there are prospects
down there I haven't even said hello to yet. *(Opens door, stops.)* I'm not going to let you go through with
this, Sheila.

Exit BRUNO.

ARTIE

I'm not going to let you go through with this, Sheila.

SHEILA

Get out.

ARTIE

Not without you.

SHEILA

I call the police.

ARTIE

I love you.

SHEILA

You're a very confused person, Artie.

ARTIE: IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO CHANGE YOUR MIND.
SHEILA: NOTHING HAPPENED!
ARTIE: GET AWAY FROM THAT CREEP.
SHEILA: NOT A THING AT ALL.
ARTIE: ALL YOU NEED TO DO IS LEAVE...
SHEILA: Leave!
ARTIE: ...WITH ME...
SHEILA: Go!
ARTIE: BEFORE YOU'RE IN TOO DEEP.
SHEILA: Go away!
ARTIE: YOU STILL HAVE TIME
TO SET YOURSELF STRAIGHT
SHEILA: Please.
ARTIE: PLEASE COME AWAY WITH ME.
IT'S NOT TOO LATE.

SHEILA

(Picking up phone)

This is the bride at the Abracadabra Manor on the Belt Parkway. There's an intruder in my chamber trying to molest...

ARTIE takes phone and hangs it up.

I don't want trouble.

ARTIE

Don't marry Bruno.

SHEILA

You and me - that was stupid, Artie.

ARTIE

You don't love him.

SHEILA

I was upset.

ARTIE

You don't even like him.

SHEILA

Artie...

ARTIE

And he doesn't love you.

Enter FRANCES, smiling.

We're ready to begin, darling.

FRANCES

Organ music. Cross-fade to

IX. CHAPEL

Lighting marks an aisle leading to an altar covered by a floral canopy. A glass wrapped in cloth is on the floor. The rest of the stage is in darkness.

Off to the side RED plays a portable electronic organ, occasionally hitting wrong notes. MAY, radiant, sings beautifully as the PROCESSION marches solemnly to the altar.

MAY
ONLY A MOMENT,
PASSING BY.
ONLY A WHISPER.
ONLY A SIGH.

Enter the USHER.

ONE SINGLE MOMENT,
LIKE ANY OTHER.
A MOMENT HERE AND NOW.

Enter the RABBI.

MOMENT BY MOMENT,
TIME MOVES ON.
HEARTBEAT BY HEARTBEAT,
HERE AND GONE.

*Enter FRANCES and MORTY.
Getting past the piano is a
tight squeeze, and FRANCES
tears her dress on it. She is
obliged to walk down the aisle
covering the rip with her
hand.*

ALL IN A MOMENT,
TWO BECOME ONE.
ONLY A VOW,
AND NOW IT'S DONE.

ONE SINGLE MOMENT
LASTING FOREVER,
BEGINNING HERE AND NOW.

Enter SHEILA.

Tableau at altar. Cross-fade to

X. BANDSTAND

BUDDY, LENNY and DREW are setting up. The OTHERS relax.

Enter ARTIE, dejected

Artie! We got the schedule!

DREW

When do we leave?

ARTIE

Next week.

DREW

No sooner than that?

ARTIE

We play Camden, Gloucester, Wilmington, Reading, Allentown, Scranton, Carbondale, Shamoken...

DREW

You have the whole tour memorized?

ARTIE

Just the first week. What are you doing here? I thought you weren't on this gig.

DREW

The bride's a friend. I came to wish her well.

ARTIE

So how come you're not in there?

DREW

That's what I want to know.

ARTIE

DREW returns to his work. Lighting fades to black, except for a spot on ARTIE. As he sings, lights rise inside the

XI. CHAPEL

Where the end of the ceremony is mimed. Both locales are now visible.

ARTIE

STAYING SINGLE.
UNCONNECTED.
STAYING SINGLE.
LIVING FREE.
NO INTRUSIONS.
STILL A KID
WITH NO ONE TO DEPEND ON.

(ARTIE, cont'd.)

PLAYING SOLO.
UNCONNECTED.
CIRCULATING.
LIVING FREE.
TIME ALONE.
I'M ALONE
WITH NO ONE TO DEPEND ON.

MAY

MOMENT BY MOMENT,
TIME MOVES ON.
HEARTBEAT BY HEARTBEAT,
HERE AND GONE.

ARTIE
STAYING SINGLE.
UNCONNECTED.
STAYING SINGLE.
LIVING FREE.
PLAYING SOLO.
NO DEMANDS.
WITH NO ONE TO DEPEND ON.

STAYING SINGLE.
STILL A KID.
LIVING FREE FOREVER
WITH NO ONE TO DEPEND ON.
NO ONE TO DEPEND ON ME.

MAY
ALL IN A MOMENT,
TWO BECOME ONE.
ONLY A VOW,
AND NOW IT'S DONE.

ONE SINGLE MOMENT
LASTING FOREVER,
BEGINNING HERE
AND NOW.

BRUNO breaks the glass under foot. Blackout over ARTIE.

The bridal party leaves the altar, to RED's uncertain accompaniment. All members of the PROCESSION exit, except for FRANCES, who addresses the Audience as if its members were in pews.

FRANCES

Thank you all for sharing our joy. And now that the future has begun, we'd like you to help us celebrate across the hall in the beautiful Bavarian Beergarten!

She gives RED a dirty look and exits. RED plays a few belated chords as we cross-fade to

XII. RECEIVING LINE

Transition in one

Consists of SHEILA, BRUNO and FRANCES. MORTY and GLORIA are among the well-wishers. Simultaneously:

MORTY

(Hugging SHEILA)

You make a lovely daughter-in-law, Sheila. *(Missing BRUNO's hair)* Don't let this big dope take advantage of you.

BRUNO

Thanks, Dad. I won't.

GLORIA attempts to hug FRANCES, who handily avoids the corsage. Enter RED and MAY.

RED

(Offering his hand to BRUNO)

Congratulations, Bruno.

FRANCES

(Limping, covering rip in gown, holding gauze pad)

Red... *(Takes him aside. Firmly)* Remember: no first dance.

RED

No first dance, right.

Enter ARTIE.

FRANCES

Bruno - business.

Exit FRANCES. BRUNO attempts to kiss SHEILA, but she turns her head and the kiss lands on her cheek. Exit BRUNO.

ARTIE gingerly approaches SHEILA. SHEILA hesitates, then runs off.

SHEILA

Bruno - wait!

Cross-fade to

XIII. The BANDSTAND in the main ballroom.

RED leads the Orchestra. A WAITER hands him a note. He stops the music and signals BUDDY for a drum roll.

RED: LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, PLEASE...
DO ME A FAVOR - GET TO YOUR TABLE.
CLEAR THE FLOOR. THEN I'LL BE ABLE
TO INTRODUCE THE ENTRANCE
OF THE BRIDE AND THE GROOM.

(Reads)

THE BRIDE, BY THE WAY, HAS ASKED ME TO MENTION
THAT THIS AFFAIR'S THE LATEST INVENTION
OF TWO OF HER FAVORITE PEOPLE
IN THE WORLD AND THE ROOM.

MAMA FRANCES -
HUBBY BRUNO.
THE HEART AND SOUL OF THE FABULOUS, LAVISH
ABRACADABRA MANOR,
THE CATERING HALL THAT KNOWS YOUR WISHES
AND PUTS THEM ONTO TRAYS AND DISHES.
REMEMBER TO CALL THE MANOR FIRST
FOR ALL YOUR CATERING NEEDS.

And now ladies and gentlemen - the bride and the groom!

*GUESTS applaud as BRUNO and SHEILA cross to the dais
under tawdry spotlights.*

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, PLEASE...
USU'LLY, THIS IS THE PART OF THE PARTY
WHEN WE GET THE BEST MAN UP HERE TO START
TEEIN' OFF ON A TOAST IN HONOR
OF THE BRIDE AND THE GROOM.

BUT THIS ISN'T USU'LLY, FOLKS, CAUSE WE'RE BLESSED
WITH A MAN THAT'S BETTER THAN THE BEST,
AND HE'S GOT A FEW WORDS TO SAY
BEFORE THE FESTIVITIES RESUME.

Ladies and gentlemen - the groom!

*BRUNO trots to the microphone. RED steps aside, takes a flask
out of his briefcase, and drinks.*

BRUNO

INSTEAD OF DRINKING
A TOAST TO ME,
LET'S HONOR THE THING
THAT MEANS MOST TO ME:

(BRUNO, cont'd)

He raises his glass.

LET'S ALL RAISE A GLASS TO THE ABRACADABRA MANOR -
THE CATERING HALL WHERE ALL YOUR DREAMS COME TRUE.
MRS. MANDELBAUM'S ABRACADABRA MANOR -
THE CATERING HALL THE KNOWS YOUR WISHES
AND PUTS THEM ONTO TRAYS AND DISHES.
REMEMBER TO CALL THE MANOR FIRST
FOR ALL YOUR CATERING NEEDS.

Thank you.

He starts for the dais. RED giddily returns to the microphone.

RED

Wait a minute, Bruno - we ain't finished with you yet.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, PLEASE...
DO ME A FAVOR - GET TO YOUR TABLE.
CLEAR THE FLOOR. THEN I'LL BE ABLE TO...

Oh. You already have cleared the floor.

He laughs.

IF WE WANT THE HAPPY COUPLE
TO GET OFF ON THE RIGHT FEET,
THEY GOT TO BE A COUPLE
WITH A COUPLE O' PAIRS O' LIGHT FEET.

Drum roll.

Ladies and gentlemen, let's make this bum get a hold of Sheila and bring her up here to do their first dance as Mr. and Mrs. Bruno Mandelbaum!

Embarrassed, BRUNO leads SHEILA to the dance floor. SHEILA enjoys her husband's displeasure. FRANCES glares at RED, who obviously signals the MUSICIANS for a change of feel.

RED

These two never told me their favorite tune, so as a personal gift to the families, I'm gonna sing 'em one of mine.

CALL ME WHEN YOU'RE BLUE.
YOU CAN COUNT ON ME
TO SEE YOU THROUGH.

(RED, cont'd)

COUNT ON ME TO REASSURE YOU.
COUNT ON ME TO BE
RIGHT HERE FOR YOU.
CALL ME WHEN YOU FEEL ALONE,
AND I'LL BE OVER THERE BEFORE YOU
HANG UP THE PHONE.
WHEN THE NIGHT IS BARE AND COLD,
AND YOU NEED A HAND TO HOLD
I GUARANTEE -
YOU CAN COUNT ON ME.

Instrumental interlude.

Ladies and gentlemen - the parents of the bride!

A COUPLE goes to the dance floor.

And now, the parents of the groom.

MORTY laughs and extends his hand to FRANCES, who ignores it. RED taps the microphone to make sure it's working.

Ladies and gentlemen - the parents...

MORTY leads GLORIA to the dance floor. FRANCES slams her fist into the dais. ARTIE steps forward, offers FRANCES his arm, and leads her to the dance floor.

Why is he up there?

FRANCES

It's his band.

ARTIE

Our agreement was for you.

FRANCES

Mrs. Mandelbaum...

ARTIE

And I want you to tell my daughter-in-law she can't do her act.

FRANCES

She won't listen to me.

ARTIE

Make her listen. Tell her the boys don't know her music. I've been embarrassed enough tonight. Come.

FRANCES

(FRANCES, cont'd.)

She leads ARTIE to BRUNO and SHEILA.

Time to change partners, Bruno.

BRUNO

But this is our first...

FRANCES

Bruno - business.

BRUNO

(To SHEILA)

Excuse me, darling.

He tries to kiss her. She turns her head. Exit FRANCES and BRUNO. ARTIE and SHEILA dance.

SHEILA

Artie, I'm a married woman.

ARTIE

Leave with me now, he'll have it annulled.

SHEILA

What kind of drugs are you on?

ARTIE

All you have to do is walk out that door.

SHEILA

I was about to say the same thing.

Drum roll.

ARTIE

(Pulling her closer)

You know I'm right, Sheila.

SHEILA

(Breaking away)

Please! Go away.

She runs off. On the bandstand, RED receives a note from the WAITER.

RED: LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, PLEASE...
I JUST GOT A NOTE FROM THE BOYS IN THE KITCHEN...
WHAT DOES IT SAY - "AN ELEGANT STAFF, WHICH IN
MY OPINION HAS TO BE
THE BEST IN THE CITY TODAY.
"THEY'RE COMFTABLE IN ALL CUISINES..."
I GUESS THAT MEANS THEY KNOW THEIR BEANS.
AND THEY TELL ME HERE
THEY'RE ALMOST READY
TO SERVE THE CONSOMMÉ'.

BOY, WOULD I LIKE SOME CONSOMMÉ'
WOULDN'T YOU LIKE SOME CONSOMMÉ'?
YOU'RE GONNA GET THE CONSOMMÉ',
SO LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, PLEASE...

WHILE WE'RE WAITIN' ON THE WAITERS
TO GET TO WORK AND SERVE THE TATERS,
WHY DON'T WE WORK UP AN APPETITE
WITH ANOTHER LITTLE DANCE?

Ladies and gentlemen - it's polka time!

The MUSICIANS play a polka. GUESTS dance.

*RED leaves the bandstand with his briefcase and walks towards
ARTIE, who exits in the same direction as SHEILA.*

*Lights dim. FRANCES is kicked in the ankle by a nearby
dancer. Cross-fade to*

XIV. BRIDAL CHAMBER

SHEILA changes into her red dress. BRUNO hovers over her.

Give an inch, Sheila! Compromise!

BRUNO

I've compromised enough.

SHEILA

Wear the white, you can add five minutes.

BRUNO

No.

SHEILA

Eight.

BRUNO

No. **SHEILA**

Ten! **BRUNO**

No, Bruno. **SHEILA**

BRUNO
Double the time you're up there, only please take off that dress!

SHEILA
Fifteen minutes is all I rehearsed.

The door crashes open. Enter ARTIE.

Sheila! **ARTIE**

You again! **BRUNO**

There's another routine we haven't... **ARTIE**

BRUNO
(Moving towards door, exasperated)
Do your worst! The sooner we put it behind us, the sooner we... Why aren't you on the bandstand?

ARTIE
As soon as we're finished here, I'll...

BRUNO
(Starting off)
Work fast. I want you to come down and get that drunk away from the microphone. *(Stops.)* See if you can get her to take off that dress.

He exits.

You really prefer that to me? **ARTIE**

I'm warning you, Artie. **SHEILA**

For the rest of your life? **ARTIE**

I won't warn you again.

SHEILA

My car's out front.

ARTIE

I will not warn you again.

SHEILA

You could have warned me when he was in here.

ARTIE

Artie, I have to get ready for my...

SHEILA

ARTIE: TELL ME YOU LOVE HIM...

SHEILA: Act.

ARTIE: LET'S HEAR YOU SAY IT.

SHEILA: I have to...

ARTIE: TELL ME YOU LOVE HIM...

SHEILA: I have to...

AND I'M ALREADY GONE.

SHEILA: Dress.

ARTIE: *(Approaching her, hand outstretched)*

TELL ME YOU LOVE HIM...

SHEILA: No...

ARTIE: SHOW ME THE WAY IT

CONSUMES (YOU)...

Music swells. ARTIE he pulls SHEILA close and kisses her. She alternates between resisting and accepting the kiss, then breaks it with a slap, surprising herself. Both freeze. MUSIC stops.

Forget me, Artie.

SHEILA

ARTIE begins to exit, but SHEILA stops him before he reaches the door and resumes the kiss with added heat. Cross-fade to

XV. ENTRANCE

RED and MAY sit at the seating card table. RED's briefcase is open in front of him. He is plastered.

Enter MORTY and GLORIA.

(Mocking)
There he is!

MORTY

What do you want?

RED

Frances sent me.

MORTY

I'm takin' a break.

RED

She says you don't get your kid up there in five minutes she wants me to take over.

MORTY

Get up there I'll cripple you.

RED

This is my son's wedding, Red. I don't wanna work.

MORTY

I'll get up there...

RED

*He tries to stand and knocks over the table. GLORIA giggles.
RED gets to his knees in an attempt to clean up the mess.*

Stand up, Bonano. Show some class. I'll get a busboy to do that. You better find out what your son's up to. *(To GLORIA)* Come on, Sweetheart.

MORTY

*Exit MORTY and GLORIA. RED remains on his knees.
Cross-fade to*

XVI. BRIDAL CHAMBER

ARTIE and SHEILA, half undressed, are in a torrid embrace.

Artie, we can't...can't do this...not here...oh, Artie...not now... we can't... *(etc.)*

SHEILA

Enter FRANCES.

Break it up. *(ARTIE and SHEILA freeze. To SHEILA)* Practicing your act, dear?

FRANCES

(FRANCES, cont'd)

SHEILA waits and runs into the adjoining bathroom.

Thanks for convincing her to take off the dress.

She opens the door for him. Cross-fade to

XVII. BANDSTAND

RED conducts the Orchestra in a manner that has little to do with the music being played. A WAITER hands him a note. He signals for the band to stop in the middle of a passage.

RED

Cut it, cut it, cut it!

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, PLEASE...
CLEAR THE TABLES...
GET TO THE FLOOR...
I GOT AN ANNOUNCEMENT...
ABOUT YOUR DINNER
WHAT ABOUT DINNER...?
IT'S ON ITS WAY, SO WHILE WE'RE
TAKIN' A BREAK, THE STROLLIN' MUSICIANS...
STROLLIN' MUSICIANS...?
THE STROLLIN' MUSICIANS'LL COME TO YOUR TABLE
AND PLAY WHATEVER YOU SAY,
SO EAT HEARTY, FOLKS,

CAUSE WHEN ME AND THE GUYS GET BACK,
YOU'RE IN FOR A SWELL SURPRISE
FROM THE BRIDE...
ONLY THE BRIDE...?
ONLY THE BRIDE,
SO LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,
PLEASE ENJOY YOUR DINN...

He knocks over the microphone. MUSIC stops.

(To LENNY)

Do a medley.

He stumbles as MAY helps him off the platform and leads him to

XVIII. The ENTRANCE

where she guides him to a chair next to a small table.

MAY

I'll get you something?

Bourbon.

RED

How about coffee?

MAY

What are you talkin' coffee? You don't announce the coffee for another hour.

RED

There's a diner down the block.

MAY

And she wants to do club dates!

RED

Enter ARTIE, walking towards the exit. He stops when he sees RED.

What happened?

ARTIE

Keep walkin'.

RED

How long has he been this way?

ARTIE

Keep walkin'.

RED

Was he like this on the stand?

ARTIE

Keep walkin'!

RED

Keep quiet, you're embarrassing me!

ARTIE

Embarrassing, you punk...

RED

He tries to stand and falls back onto the chair, exhausted. ARTIE loosens his collar.

You gotta get in there, Artie.

ARTIE

I gotta get out.

They can't be without a leader.

RED

You're the leader.

ARTIE

The business, Artie...

RED

Your business.

ARTIE

(Furiously)

RED

Our business, damn you! What do you want me to do, hand it all to Morty?

ARTIE

Morty made you an excellent offer.

RED

I didn't build for Morty! It was for...

ARTIE

Me, I know. Sorry you wasted your time.

RED

Waste my time!

ARTIE

What made you think I want to end up like you?

RED

Keep walkin'!

ARTIE starts off

Artie. *(ARTIE stops.)* I didn't want to end up like my old man either. He spent his whole life scroungin' to work for lousy bosses.

ARTIE

You became a musician. You did something you *wanted* to do.

RED

(Bitter)

Yeah. Make something beautiful. Make the people dance. I was gonna be the next Benny Goodman and I was willin' to sacrifice everything to get there.

ARTIE

Like father like son.

RED

Like father like son. Goin' down to the union to scrounge for work with some lousy boss. That's why I started a business, Artie. With a business, you can have something, leave something. I'm no Morty Mann but with you, kid, you takin' over...

ARTIE

(Interrupting)

I'm gonna get my car and take you home.

RED

Maybe you're right. Maybe I did waste my time. I don't want to see you waste yours. Time is all you get to work with in this world.

ONLY TIME.
YOU GET SO MUCH TIME.
ONLY SO MUCH TIME
FOR BUILDIN' A WORLD
THAT'S GOT ALL THAT A WORLD IS SUPPOSED TO.
AND YOU USE IT FOR CHASIN
SOME TWO-BIT DREAM
THAT YOU NEVER GET ANYWHERE CLOSE TO.
BUT YOU STILL HAVE TIME.
YOU GOT PLENTY OF TIME.

SO YOU LOOK AT THE WORLD
THAT YOU MADE FOR YOURSELF.
YOU GET UP THE NERVE TO FACE IT.
YOU DECIDE TO FORGET YOUR TWO-BIT DREAM,
BUT YOU DON'T HAVE A DREAM TO REPLACE IT.
BUT THERE'S TIME.
WHAT'S THE TIME FOR?

THEN ONE DAY THERE'S SOMEBODY ELSE,
AND HE ONLY HAS YOU TO DEPEND ON.
AND THE TWO-BIT CRAP YOU WANT FOR YOURSELF,
YOU DONT HAVE THE TIME TO SPEND ON.

CAUSE HE'S ALL YOU HAVE.
CAUSE HE'S ALL THERE IS,
AND YOU'RE BUILDIN' THE WORLD
THAT YOU WANT TO BE HIS.
AND YOU FINALLY KNOW
WHAT YOUR WHOLE LIFE IS FOR.
YOU GIVE ALL THAT YOU HAVE ,
AND YOU WANT TO GIVE MORE -

BUT THERE'S TIME.
ONLY SO MUCH TIME.
ONLY TIME.

When my old man died, he died ashamed. All he left me was the funeral bill. I wanted to do better for you.

You have nothing to be ashamed of.

ARTIE

I'm giving you a gift. You won't take it.

RED

Maybe it's the wrong gift.

ARTIE

What else can I give you?

RED

Why don't you just wish me luck.

ARTIE

MAYBE I'M MAKING A MESS OF MY LIFE -
IT'S NOT UP TO YOU TO SAVE ME.
I'M TRYING TO MAKE A SUCCESS OF MY LIFE.
THE LIFE THAT YOU GAVE ME.
GIVE IT TIME.
I NEED TIME.
ONLY TIME.

They embrace. Enter FRANCES and BRUNO, stern expressions on their faces.

Red...

FRANCES

Gimme a minute. I'll be up there in a minute.

RED

Go home. Morty's taking over.

FRANCES

Morty!

RED

Someone has to be in charge.

BRUNO

Not in front of my band!

RED

He tries to stand, knocks the table over and drops back onto the chair.

FRANCES

(To ARTIE)
Get him out of here

She and BRUNO begin to exit.

ARTIE

Wait. *(They stop.)* Those are my musicians in there. If I leave, they leave. The only thing Morty'll be able to do for you is plug in a radio. *(To RED)* This is the last time, Dad.

Exit ARTIE, FRANCES and BRUNO.

RED

Let's go get some air, May.

They start for the door.

How come you never told me you sing so good?

MAY

I've been telling you since I know you, Red.

RED

Real good. You got a future in this business. All you need is someone like me to show you the ropes.

Cross-fade to

XIX. THE BANDSTAND

ARTIE leads.

ARTIE

You were promised a surprise with your dinner and I'm happy to tell you I'm not it. But we've kept you in suspense long enough, so without any further delay, ladies and gentlemen - the bride!

Enter SHEILA, carrying the bridal bouquet, wearing her wedding gown with the red shoes. She takes the microphone from ARTIE.

SHEILA

Thank you ladies and gentlemen. Thanks for showing up in this miserable weather just to see me. I'll never forget it as long as I live and I want you to know from the bottom of my heart it's a thrill to be here, really. And now let's get this over with...

Holds up bouquet.

(SHEILA, cont'd.)

Anybody in the market?

Shuts her eyes.

One... two... *three!*

She tosses the bouquet straight up. ARTIE catches it.

So who's the lucky... *(Laughing)* Guess I'll have to try again.

She holds out her hand for the flowers. ARTIE puts them behind his back.

Guess I won't have to try again. *(To ARTIE)* Don't eat them all at once, young man. *(Front)* Now it's time for the portion of the evening I've personally been looking forward to most. *(To ARTIE)* Are we ready?

ARTIE counts down.

HOWDJA LIKE TO LISTEN TO
THE SONG I WROTE?
THE SONG I WROTE.
THE SONG I WROTE.
HOWDJA LIKE TO LISTEN TO
THE SONG I WROTE?
I WROTE IT FOR PEOPLE LIKE YOU.

(To ARTIE, who has not moved)

Don't you have something to do? The little boys' room is next to the Maharaja Rock Garden. You can use the parking lot if it's crowded in there.

He moves towards her.

ARTIE: Sheila...

SHEILA: *(Hastily)*
I'M THE ONE WHO THOUGHT UP
EVERY WORD AND NOTE.
THERE'S NOT ONE QUOTE
IN THE SONG I WROTE...

He moves closer.

(Under her breath)

Will you please leave the stage!

ARTIE: Sheila...

SHEILA: I'M THE ONE WHO THOUGHT UP EVERY
WORD AND NOTE,
DEVOTED TO PEOPLE LIKE...

Sheila, I love you.

ARTIE

I hate you!

SHEILA

(Grabs microphone)

Ladies and gentlemen, I love this woman, this woman loves me!

ARTIE

SHEILA knocks the microphone out of ARTIE's hand and storms off. The MUSICIANS stop playing. ARTIE follows SHEILA.

Hold it Artie. What are we supposed to do?

LENNY

Keep playing

ARTIE

Playing what?

LENNY

(Pushing past him)

Whatever you want play...Sheila!

ARTIE

He runs after SHEILA, who has fled to the dais. The MUSICIANS look at each other, then one by one launch into a loud, dischordant jazz improvisation. ARTIE reaches the dais and tries to get to SHEILA. MORTY blocks his way.

Get back on the stand!

MORTY

Make them stop that awful noise!

FRANCES

Get back up there and take charge you amateur!

MORTY

Ruined! My beautiful wedding, ruined!

BRUNO

A WAITER pushes in a cart bearing an enormous wedding cake.

(BRUNO, cont'd)

(Inspired)

Follow me!

He runs to the bandstand and grabs the microphone. MORTY follows.

People! People! This is the moment we've all been waiting for! People! People! The bride is going to cut the cake! The bride is going to cut the cake!

He returns to the dais to help FRANCES drag SHEILA to the bandstand. ARTIE follows.

(To MUSICIANS)

Cut it, cut it, cut it...

MORTY

Let go of me!

SHEILA

It's time to cut the cake, dear.

FRANCES

The MUSICIANS stop playing.

Cake. B flat.

MORTY

The MUSICIANS vamp.

And now, ladies and gentlemen, the lovely bride will cut the very first piece of the wedding cake!

MUSICIANS: WE ALL WANT A PIECE OF THE CAKE.
WE ALL WANT A PIECE OF THE CAKE.
IT TOOK THE BAKER
SO LONG TO BAKE,
WE ALL WANT A PIECE OF THE CAKE.

BRUNO: Take the knife, dear.

MUSICIANS: WE'VE HAD THE POTATOES AND STEAK.
OUR TUMMIES ARE STARTING TO ACHE.
BUT THERE'S STILL SO MUCH
TO PARTAKE OF -
LET'S GET A PIECE OF THAT CAKE.

BRUNO: *(Waving the knife at her)*
The whole room is waiting!

He tries to place the knife in SHEILA'S hand but she refuses to take it. They struggle.

MUSICIANS: THERE'S NOT A FRIEND OR RELATIVE
IN THIS ROOM
WHO DOESN'T WANT TO WISH
THE BRIDE AND GROOM
A SWEET AND A RICH
AND A BEAUTIFUL LIFE,
SO COME ONE, SHEILA -
USE THAT KNIFE!

BRUNO presses the knife into SHEILA's hand and tries to force her to make the cut.

WE ALL WANT A PIECE OF THE CAKE -
AND COFFEE TO KEEP US AWAKE.
TO PASS IT UP
WOULD BE A MISTAKE.
WE ALL WANT A PIECE OF THE
ALL WANT A PIECE OF THE
ALL WANT A PIECE OF THE CAKE!

BRUNO plunges the knife and both their hands into the cake. SHEILA frees her hand and punches BRUNO squarely on the nose. Blood drips onto the frosting. BRUNO squeals and strikes wildly back at her. A fist fight ensues. FRANCES and MORTY attempt to pull them apart.

RED enters from outside, followed by MAY. He runs to the bandstand.

RED

Get away from my band!

MORTY

Step down, Bonano!

FRANCES catches one of BRUNO's stray punches and releases SHEILA.

SHEILA

(Running to ARTIE)
Get me out of this loony bin.

SHEILA and ARTIE start for the exit.

Get back here!

RED

FRANCES tries to block ARTIE and SHEILA and is knocked down. MORTY, BRUNO and a few of the GUESTS pursue them. RED mounts the bandstand.

(To MUSICIANS)

"Count On Me," nice and easy.

The MUSICIANS vamp. As he sings, RED turns up the volume on the P.A. His voice comes over too loud.

CALL...

He falters. ARTIE stops at the exit. The MUSICIANS keep vamping.

CALL ME WHEN YOU'RE BLUE.
YOU CAN COUNT ON ME
TO SEE... THROUGH.
COUNT ON ME... SURE YOU
COUNT...

He makes a choking sound and collapses. The MUSICIANS stop playing. MORTY rushes back to the bandstand, followed by ARTIE.

Keep playin'! Don't stop! Keep playin'! Finish the song!

MORTY

(Tearing RED's shirt open)

You don't listen, you goddam idiot!

RED

Finish the song!

MORTY

You don't listen to no one!

One by one, the MUSICIANS resume playing. ARTIE kneels next to RED. MORTY moves back.

RED

(Softly)

Pick it up for me, Artie. Finish the song.

ARTIE goes to the microphone, terrified.

ARTIE

COUNT ON ME TO REASSURE YOU.
COUNT ON ME TO BE...

RED

(As ARTIE sings)
No, No, stop, that isn't it...

ARTIE

...RIGHT THERE FOR...

RED

Cut it, Artie, you're doin' it wrong!

MUSICIANS stop playing.

Take it in six eight, Lenny.

MORTY

Six eight?

RED

B-bottom-bah!

Vamp starts - it is Artie's arrangement of the song.

ARTIE

You hate it in six eight.

RED

That's how you're supposed to do it, son. Finish the song.

ARTIE

WHEN YOU'RE NIGHTS ARE BARE AND COLD
AND YOU NEED A HAND TO HOLD,
I GUARANTEE
YOU CAN COUNT ON ME.

(Segue to II-6.)

ACT II, Scene 6

Epilog

Another catering hall.

ARTIE finishes the song and exits. Vamp continues as lighting dims over the empty stage. From offstage, we hear the CHORUS.

CHORUS

(Airily)

TIME...
ONLY TIME...

Enter MAY. She takes center stage.

MAY

MOMENT BY MOMENT,
TIME MOVES ON.
HEARTBEAT BY HEARTBEAT,
HERE AND GONE.

Lights rise over bandstand.

You've been dancing to the music of the Red Bonano Orchestra...

BAND

CON SENTIMENTO E CON DULCIANO

MAY

You've also been listening to the music of the Gigolos, who volunteered to be here even though this kind of date is something they never do. And now, ladies and gentlemen - the bride and the groom!

*Enter ARTIE and SHEILA. to an up-tempo "Only A Moment".
MAY steps back as they take her place at center.*

ARTIE

Thank you, thank you, thank you!

SHEILA

Thank you all for coming out tonight, just to see me!

ARTIE

Us.

SHEILA

Us. Usually when I'm up here it's work work work, but tonight's different. Tonight it's a thrill to be here...

ARTIE

Really.

SHEILA

...and I want you to know from the bottom of my heart that I'll never forget it as long as I live.

ARTIE

Now it's time for the portion of the evening I've been looking forward to the most.

MAY signals the MUSICIANS for a segue.

SHEILA

Ladies and gentlemen, direct from his extended engagement with a chaise lounge in Pompano Beach, the founder and guiding light of our little orchestra...

ARTIE

Mr. Red Bonano!

Enter RED in a pressed white suit, loud tropical shirt, and magnificent Florida tan. SHEILA steps back from the microphone and greets RED with a kiss.

ARTIE signals for segue.

This is the first song my father taught me.

ARTIE

IT'S TIME TO CALL IT A NIGHT
OH HOW I WISH I COULD STAY
IF WE DON'T
CALL IT A NIGHT RIGHT NOW
HOW WILL I
EVER
GO MY WAY?

WE HAD A WONDERFUL TIME

WASN'T GOOD?
ALL THAT IT COULD BE,
SO LET'S
CALL IT A NIGHT RIGHT NOW
CALL IT A NIGHT RIGHT NOW

GIGOLOS

CALL IT A NIGHT
WISH WE COULD STAY - OO

CALL IT A NIGHT

NEVER GO, NEVER GO
NEVER GO, AH -

WHAT A WONDERFUL TIME,
WHAT A WONDERFUL TIME

IT WAS GOOD, IT WAS
ALL THAT IT COULD BE
SO LET'S

TIME TO CALL IT A NIGHT

TIME TO CALL IT A NIGHT

(ARTIE, cont'd.)

NOW THAT WE'VE
CALLED IT A NIGHT
IT'S TIME TO WELCOME IN THE
DAY
CALL ME.

(GIGOLOS, cont'd.)

CALL IT A NIGHT
NEW DAY, NEW DAY

RED signals for segue.

ALL

CALL ME WHEN YOU'RE BLUE
YOU CAN COUNT ON ME TO SEE YOU THROUGH.
COUNT ON ME TO REASSURE YOU.
COUNT ON ME TO BE RIGHT THERE FOR YOU.

CALL ME WHEN YOU'RE ALL ALONE,
AND I'LL BE OVER THERE BEFORE YOU
HANG UP THE PHONE.

WHEN YOUR NIGHTS ARE BARE AND COLD
AND YOU NEED A HAND TO HOLD,
I GUARANTEE
YOU CAN COUNT ON ME.

ARTIE

Nighty-night!

END OF PLAY