

THE FABULOUS LIPITONES

BY JOHN MARKUS AND
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ORIGINAL MUSIC BY
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MARK ST. GERMAIN



DRAMATISTS
PLAY SERVICE
INC.

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THE FABULOUS LIPITONES premiered at Theatrical Outfit (Tom Key, Executive Director) in Atlanta, Georgia, on March 20, 2013, at the Balzer Theater. It was directed by Justin Anderson; the musical director was Michael J. Monroe; the set and costume design was by Moirah and Isabel Curley-Clay, Axis Studios; the lighting design was by Mike Post; the sound design was by Jeff Millsaps; and the stage manager was Wendy Palmer. The cast was as follows:

PHIL RIZZARDI.....	William S. Murphey
HOWARD DUNPHY.....	Tom Key
WALLY SMITH.....	Glenn Rainey
BABA MATI SINGH (BOB).....	Daniel Hilton

THE FABULOUS LIPITONES was originally produced for Goodspeed Musicals by Michael Price, Executive Director.

CHARACTERS

PHIL RIZZARDI, owner of Phil's Eternally Fit Gym & Tanning Salon; 50s, possible ill-fitting toupée.

HOWARD DUNPHY, accountant at the Purina Dog Chow processing plant outside of town; 50s.

WALLY SMITH, head pharmacist of an independent drugstore in Madison County; 50s.

BABA MATI SINGH (BOB), mechanic at Ralph's Gas-N-Git Automotive; 20s.

CASTING NOTE:

Casting: With a four-person cast, one of the actors can pre-record the offstage voice of RALPH, the manager of the garage where Bob works. Others can record the parts of NEWS ANCHOR, OFFICER FRANK VANDEMUTTER, TED, and SKIP.

PLACE

London, Ohio. A farm town 40 miles west of Columbus.

Basement of Howard Dunphy.

Reno Grand Regency Auditorium, Reno, Nevada.

(Should be a one-set production — the basement — with other locations indicated by a curtain in back of the singers.)

TIME

The present.

THE FABULOUS LIPITONES

ACT ONE

Scene 1

Organ music. Lights up, funeral parlor ... Off to the side sits a somber Phil, and next to him, Wally, who is clearly upset. Next to him, a third empty chair. Howard stands at the podium. There might be an easel holding an enlarged photo of the late Andy Lippinski.

HOWARD. Thank you, Reverend Timmons, for that lovely eulogy. Yes, Andy Lippinski was a devoted husband for thirty-six years to his beautiful wife, Georgina. But as you all know, Andy's other passion and profound talent was singing lead for our barbershop quartet.

WALLY. *(Choking up.)* Did all our arrangements. Even designed our costumes.

HOWARD. It is only fitting that he suffered his fatal heart attack as we competed at the regional championship in Indianapolis. Yet, Andy Lippinski held his high B-flat until the end of our final song.

WALLY. Sang his heart out.

PHIL. Sssh.

HOWARD. The Fabulous Lipitones will never be the same. Thank you. *(Howard takes his seat. Wally stands, to the consternation of the others. He crosses to speak.)*

WALLY. Georgina, this will only take a second. *(He arrives at the podium.)* I wasn't on the program today —

PHIL. What the hell's he doing?

WALLY. My name is Wally Smith and I sing baritone with the Fabulous Lipitones. Andy had a favorite number. *(Wally removes his jacket, revealing a striped barbershop vest. Pointing to it.)* Andy.

PHIL. His wife said no barbershop! *(Wally blows a pitch pipe. Phil gestures "No way." Howard is torn. Wally blows it again.)* Are you nuts? *(In an attempt to hook them, Wally begins.)*

WALLY.

AFTER YOU'VE GONE, AND LEFT ME CRYING
AFTER YOU'VE GONE, THERE'S NO DENYING

(Howard, left with no choice, stands and joins him.)

WALLY and HOWARD.

YOU'LL FEEL BLUE, YOU'LL FEEL SAD

PHIL. You're really doing this?

WALLY and HOWARD.

YOU'LL MISS THE BESTEST FRIEND YOU EVER HAD

(They just look at Phil ...)

PHIL. *(Finally sings.)* Bum bum bum ... *(Crosses to them, driving an up-tempo version. They launch into the song in their "performance" mode, with rehearsed routine moves ...)*

WALLY, HOWARD, and PHIL.

AFTER YOU'VE GONE, AND LEFT ME CRYING
AFTER YOU'VE GONE, THERE'S NO DENYING
OOH, BLUE! OOH, SAD! DAT!

(As always performed, they gesture to their lead, where there is now only a space.)

EVER HAD!

THERE'LL COME A TIME, NOW DON'T FORGET IT.
THERE'LL COME A TIME WHEN YOU'LL REGRET IT.
SOMEDAY, WHEN YOU GROW LONELY
YOUR HEART WILL BREAK LIKE MINE AND YOU'LL WANT ME
ONLY
AFTER YOU'VE GONE, AFTER YOU'VE GONE ...

PHIL.

AWAY!

WALLY.

AWAY!

(A beat.)

HOWARD.

AWAY!

WALLY, HOWARD, and PHIL.

AWAY!

(Fade to black. Music takes us to ...)

Scene 2

Lights up on the finished basement of Howard Dunphy. Maybe a piano, couch, a washer-dryer, and a few neon beer signs. A sled and a deer head are among other trophies hanging on the wall. A vintage slot machine. A poster of the Rat Pack, a ship's wheel or something nautical. A bar with four stools sits stage left. On the bar, a lamp made of a pink elephant leaning against a street pole. Steps from the first floor lead down to the basement and a door stage right leads to the outside. Howard, Wally, and Phil slowly enter, all clad in dark jackets and ties. Wally and Howard remove their jackets, revealing black armbands on their sleeves.

HOWARD. I have to say, it's the first time I've ever been asked to leave a funeral.

WALLY. Yes, but did you hear the applause we got on the song?

PHIL. The applause was for Georgina as she threw us out.

WALLY. I don't understand. Why on earth would she be so upset with us?

PHIL. Maybe because her husband spent more time with us than her. She's been a barbershop widow for years.

WALLY. *(Realizing.)* We're a trio now. *(Phil's at the bar pouring shots.)*

PHIL. I'll tell you what did him in: hitting those high notes, holding them forever without taking a breath, the competitions. It's lethal.

HOWARD. Died with his bowtie on.

PHIL. Gents, it's time to raise a glass to our departed comrade.

HOWARD. *(Raises his glass.)* Andy, you were the best of us.

WALLY. Andy, it was a privilege making music with you.

PHIL. Andy, you're dead and we're done.

HOWARD. Phil!

WALLY. That's terrible!

PHIL. Come on. Nobody cares for this music anymore. Seriously, a show of hands: Who here has ever gotten any action singing barbershop? *(Howard timidly raises his.)* You're married. Put it down.

WALLY. How can you talk like this? We just won the regionals!

PHIL. A sympathy vote! Our lead dropped dead.

HOWARD. Phil's got a point, Wally. We were good, but I think I heard better that day.

WALLY. So? We could be a Cinderella story. An unknown group from a podunk town with two traffic lights emerges as the greatest barbershop quartet in the country! They'll put us on *CBS This Morning with Charlie Rose*!

PHIL. Are you out of your mind? We're down one man. We can't compete.

WALLY. We'll find somebody.

HOWARD. Find an experienced barbershopper in two weeks? How?

PHIL. Well, with this music we should start looking in nursing homes.

WALLY. There must be someone out there.

PHIL. Come on, Wally, we've sung together since high school. Enough already. Find a new hobby. And move out of your mother's house.

WALLY. My mother's our biggest fan! This will devastate her.

HOWARD. Phil, we *are* still in demand.

WALLY. He's right. Remember the Port Lucy Prison for the Criminally Insane? They went crazy for us.

PHIL. Because they STARTED OUT THAT WAY! The guards had to show them how to clap.

HOWARD. I don't want to sing in any more prisons, Wally.

WALLY. *Et tu*, Howard? C'mon. Andy wouldn't want us to bow out now. We're the number one quartet in the Johnny Appleseed region!

HOWARD. Yes, but we could also look at it as quitting while we're ahead. And the truth is, my wife isn't getting any better. You guys know that.

WALLY and PHIL. Uh-huh. Right. Sure.

HOWARD. Her nurse only works part-time. Mavis needs me to be home more.

WALLY. This *is* your basement! (*Points up.*) Mavis' sickbed is in your living room!

PHIL. Wally, we all know why you want to keep this group together. Howard and I have a life. You — and I don't mean this in a negative way — have no life.

WALLY. I do so!!

PHIL. You haven't had a date since your junior prom. And that was with one of the ladies on the cafeteria line.

HOWARD. There are plenty of attractive single women in this town.

WALLY. And plenty of opportunities for rejection. Then they come into the pharmacy and I have to fill their prescriptions for creams and lubricants. It's embarrassing.

PHIL. So, there's plenty of smokin' babes in the next county. Do what I do. Drive to Dayton.

WALLY. Really, Phil? And what exactly is so smokin' in Dayton?

PHIL. See? If you gotta ask, maybe that's your problem.

WALLY. I will not listen to life advice from a man who runs a tanning parlor!

PHIL. A) It's not a tanning parlor, it's a tanning *salon*. And B) It's also a gym that I own. And C) I'm sitting on news that's going to rock this town.

WALLY. What? That thing on your head is your real hair? (*Or, if Phil wears no toupée: "What? You bronze twice a day?"*)

PHIL. Listen, pal, don't be throwing stones when you live in a glass house with You-Know-Who!

WALLY. Bold talk from a man who wears Spanx!

PHIL. I do not wear Spanx!

WALLY. Yes you do. I sold them to you.

PHIL. And you charged me retail.

HOWARD. You two, please! Come on, now. Of all days.

PHIL. Someone explain to me why I ever started with this.

HOWARD. Because everything we tried to do on our own didn't work out. This was the one thing we were all good at. Together.

PHIL. Yeah, but all Andy ever wanted us to sing was those musty oldies. Remember when we worked up that Tom Jones number and did it for Andy?

HOWARD. Yikes. He compared him to a male prostitute.

PHIL. Why do you think I had to break away from the group for a while? I need passion. I need sensuality.

WALLY. Are you referring to your solo show at the Holiday Inn Express? Where you sang all those Tom Jones ripoffs?

PHIL. Those weren't ripoffs. Those were homages.

WALLY. Closed after three performances.

PHIL. Because the management mishandled my act. They booked me to sing during the breakfast buffet.

HOWARD. I thought they were clever about it. I always ordered the "It's Not Unusual" grand slam.

WALLY. Phil, face it. The only true success each of us ever had was as a team. *This team.*

PHIL. Time to fold the tent, boys. The Fat Lady's sung and she's not singing barbershop.

WALLY. How can we even think of dropping out now? If we find a fourth we have a shot at winning the nationals!

PHIL. You're delusional. The best we could ever hope for is second place. You're forgetting the reigning champions the past four years in a row?

HOWARD and WALLY. (*Realizing, with dread.*) The Sons of Pitches.

PHIL. Last year, in the semi-finals with that group from Florida —

WALLY. The High Colonics.

PHIL. It wasn't enough just to beat them. Those Sons of Pitches camped out under their hotel window and sang their losing song over and over and over 'til the sun came up. They're sick and they're twisted.

THE FABULOUS LIPITONES

written by John Markus and Mark St. Germain

original music by Randy Courts

original lyrics by Mark St. Germain

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What happens when a barbershop quartet loses a key member to a heart-stopping high B-flat? The three surviving members are scrambling to find a tenor before a national competition. When they hear golden tones being sung over the phone at an autobody shop, the three Lipitones left are sure they have their fourth ... but when they meet him in person, he's not quite what they expected. An uproarious comedy that puts a fusty American musical genre into today's globalized, sensationalistic world.

"THE FABULOUS LIPITONES doesn't set out to be fabulous, and that makes this friendly show all the better. Indeed, this a cappella musical works just fine without much glitter or glamour — its greatest pleasures spring from the simplest of intentions."

—**The New York Times**

"THE FABULOUS LIPITONES is pure fun from the opening scene to the final curtain call."

—**BroadwayWorld.com**

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