

PLAYBILL



PLAY IT AGAIN NY

Development Playbill | Foundation Edition

Created by Amy Matthew

Story, characters and preliminary 20-song map

DEVELOPMENT MATERIAL

Concepts and song titles may evolve during writing.

The Joke and the Dream

New York City, 1973-1974. Five fiercely different comedians fight for stage time in a cramped downtown club, enduring empty rooms, merciless hecklers, stolen jokes and sudden attention. As they build a fanbase and compete to become the next big thing, late-night television stands on the verge of changing American comedy forever.

THE HEART OF THE MUSICAL

Being the funniest person in the room may get you noticed, but knowing who you are when the room stops laughing is what makes you last.

THE MUSICAL LANGUAGE

A fast theatrical blend of 1970s funk, soul, jazz, pop-rock, comic patter and emotionally honest character songs. Stand-up rhythms become musical rhythms: setups build tension, punchlines land like percussion and the band reacts to the room.

CORE THEMES

- Ambition versus friendship
- Failure in public
- The seduction of fame
- Who gets called funny
- Originality and joke theft
- Identity after the applause

Principal Characters

DANNY MERCER | 27 - THE CHARMER

Naturally magnetic and convinced fame is inevitable. Audiences love him, but his dependence on charm - and borrowed material - threatens the group.

RUBY ROSEN | 25 - THE TRUTH-TELLER

Fearless and clever, Ruby is tired of being told women are not funny. Her most personal material earns the biggest laughs and creates powerful enemies.

LEON PRICE | 28 - THE SOCIAL SATIRIST

Brilliant at exposing prejudice, politics and hypocrisy. Club owners want a safer act, but Leon refuses to become more comfortable for television.

FRANKIE DELUCA | 30 - THE STORYTELLER

A warm physical comic who turns his loud family into material. He appears confident while privately worrying that he has already missed his chance.

EDDIE KIM | 24 - THE QUIET SURPRISE

An anxious dry-witted comic whose silences become funnier than other people's punchlines. His family expects security, not unpaid midnight sets.

Supporting Characters

SAL MORETTI - THE CLUB OWNER

Owner of the struggling downtown comedy club where the five meet. Cynical, paternal and relentlessly practical, he understands that every laugh has a cost.

MIRIAM VALE - THE TALENT SCOUT

A powerful television scout who can change one career, but not all five. She recognizes talent while representing the compromises required to package it.

THE HECKLERS AND AUDIENCE ENSEMBLE

A shape-shifting company of hecklers, fans, critics, agents, tourists, bartenders and rival comics. Their energy determines whether the room lives or dies.

THE CLUB BAND

Visible musicians who react to jokes, rescue failed bits and propel scene changes. Over time they become the heartbeat of the comedians' shared home.

TIME AND PLACE

New York City, 1973-1974 - when comedy clubs are incubators, television is a distant prize and an industry-changing late-night revolution is just ahead.

Act One

1. FIVE MINUTES UP

Company - Five comics fight for tiny scraps of stage time.

2. NOBODY LAUGHS FOR FREE

Sal - Every laugh must be earned.

3. BOOED OFF BROADWAY

The Five - Everyone survives a brutal performance.

4. WRITE IT DOWN

The Five - Daily disasters become new material.

5. LAUGHING AT ME

Ruby - She reclaims the ridicule aimed at her.

6. READ THE ROOM

Leon - He refuses to soften his perspective.

7. ONE GOOD NIGHT

Frankie - One perfect set could justify years of failure.

8. FACES IN THE CROWD

Company - Their first loyal fans begin returning.

9. SOMEONE IS ALWAYS FUNNIER

The Five - Competition and insecurity surface.

10. THE NEXT BIG THING

Company - Miriam arrives; Act One finale.

Act Two

1. EVERYBODY KNOWS MY NAME

Company - Growing popularity feels intoxicating.

2. DON'T STEAL MY PUNCHLINE

The Five - Accusations of joke theft explode.

3. BEFORE SOMEBODY STEALS IT

Danny - He tries to protect his status.

4. FAMOUS FOR FIVE MINUTES

Company - Success disappears as quickly as it arrived.

5. FUNNY UNTIL IT HURTS

Eddie - Anxiety beneath the quiet comedy.

6. MAKE THEM COMFORTABLE

Miriam, Ruby and Leon - Executives demand safer material.

7. THE LAUGH THAT CHANGED

Frankie - The audience begins laughing differently.

8. NO JOKE BETWEEN US

The Five - Friendship fractures and truths emerge.

9. FIVE MINUTES MORE

The Five - They reunite before their biggest opportunity.

10. PLAY IT AGAIN NY

Full Company - A resilient love letter to New York.

The World Onstage

MUSIC

1970s funk, soul, jazz and pop-rock combine with comedy patter and vulnerable R&B-colored; ballads. The band is visible and actively responds to the performers.

COMEDY

Each comic needs a distinct rhythm and worldview. The humor comes from character, disastrous sets, competition and truth - never from treating identity as the punchline.

MOVEMENT

Fast ensemble choreography captures the city and backstage chaos. Microphone cords, stools, scripts, bar tables and curtains become rhythmic stage tools.

SCENERY AND LIGHT

A revolving downtown club expands into sidewalks, apartments, television offices and fantasy versions of success. Marquee bulbs and hard spotlights track the intoxicating rise from empty room to packed house.

DEVELOPMENT NOTE

This Playbill preserves the first foundation. Character histories, relationships, comedy material, scene order and song titles remain flexible until the book and score are drafted.