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JITTERBUG JULIET — THE ONE-ACT MUSICAL

Jitterbug Juliet

the mini-musical

A one-act
musical comedy



book by Mark Dissette
music and lyrics
by Bill Francoeur



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PRODUCTION NOTES

Set in the '40s, a rehearsal of *Romeo and Juliet* is booked in the same room as a jitterbug contest. Prologue can be performed with a CD sound track or done live with a microphone. The set is a large dance hall. There are a few small tables set around the space. The center is open. A banner hangs in the back of the hall with the words: "The Verona Room," lettered on it.

Most of the characters in the show have been written so they can be played by either a man or a woman. The design of the musical gives the director latitude in the casting process. For example, both of the roles of the fathers could be changed to mothers with a few changes in dialogue. The director should encourage the performers to have fun with the show. Jitterbugging covers a lot of ground. It can be something as simple as a spin or as complex as the fantastic *Arial* maneuvers seen in competitions. Keep it simple and fun. Lots of changing partners is visually fun and not that difficult to choreograph. In the '40s it was very common for girls to dance with each other. So if you are faced with one of those awkward auditions where you have fifty girls and five boys, you can easily expand the cast to fit your needs. The characters are big and fun. The action should fit that. Have fun.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

NARRATOR: A Renaissance costume is needed to give the flavor of the Shakespearean period. Narrator part is written for a woman but can be played by a man.

MR. MONTAGUE: A man in his 50s. He is successful yet is struggling with his business.

MR. CAPULET: A man in his 50s. He and Montague at one time were the best of friends. He considers himself to be a great director (he's not).

BRAD GREGORY: Evil and slimy; however, when we first meet him he seems like a nice guy. He quickly shows his true colors. Brad is a lawyer in his late 20s to early 30s. He works for Mr. Montague.

BETTY ABRAHAM: A quiet, unassuming accountant in her early 20s. Betty wears glasses and dreams of conquering her fears and being something bigger one day.

THE MAYOR: More hot air than a balloon festival. She (or he) loves to come in and take over. She is always accompanied by ...

THE YES PEOPLE: They are never far from the Mayor. They live to tell her “yes.” They are like watching ants, hovering around the Mayor to make sure she is happy. There can be as many as you see fit.

JUDY: She comes off as a cleaning lady who has a bit of a hearing issue, but looks can be deceiving. She is in her 40s to 50s. Can be played by a man.

RON MONTAGUE: A dashing young man. Charming, caring, handsome, happy-go-lucky, young, and a good dancer. He’s the son of Mr. Montague.

JULIET CAPULET: A young beauty with brains and a sense of humor. She’s the daughter of Mr. Capulet.

MERCY O'REILLY: A bundle of energy and always ready with a quip to set off those in charge. Mercy is Ron’s best friend. The part is written for a woman but can be played by a man.

SPIDER JOHNSON: A wiry little fellow with quick eyes and even quicker hands. He starts out as a weasel, but who knows?

THE ACTORS: MATHEW, MARK, LUKE, JOHN — They mean well; however, their talents aren’t quite up to the task of the Bard. Uncoordinated and melodramatic, the broader their performance, the funnier. If you want to use women, here are a few names to think about: Martha, Mags, Lee, and Jane.

THE DANCERS: Whatever number you can get. Energetic and excited, they just love to dance.

BOYS: Again, as many energetic performers as you’d like to handle.

GIRLS: Limited only by the space on the stage for as many performers as want to participate.

SONG TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Prologue (We Got It All in Our Town)	1
2. Jitterbug Juliet	12
3. Think Like a Winner	22
4. Romeo and Juliet (Underscore)	26
5. Romeo and Juliet (Underscore)	27
6. Listen to the Beat	28
7. Jump 'n' Jive	34
8. Romeo and Juliet (Underscore)	37
9. Jump 'n' Jive (Underscore)	38
10. Finale (Jitterbug Juliet — Reprise)	42

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(The NARRATOR enters, crosses to Center. She carries a copy of the script. As she begins, the rest of the CAST enters from Stage Right and Left. As the NARRATOR speaks, she moves Downstage Right to give room to the first group.)

CAST: (*Singing*) Come on and join the masquerade,
A Romeo and Juliet cavalcade,
The big band forties and the hit parade.
We got it all in our town!

Swing a little, sway a little side by side,
BOYS: Jitterbug, boogie woogie, slip 'n' slide,
ALL: We got it all in our town!

ALL: We got 'em all for you, you bet!

(Music under following dialogue)

1 **NARRATOR:** (*As the NARRATOR speaks, each character comes*
2 *to Center, presents him or herself, then moves Stage Right*
3 *and Left to make room for the next character. MR.*
4 *MONTAGUE and MR. CAPULET come Center.')* **Here,**
5 **Montague and Capulet we see, once loving friends, now**
6 **bitter enemies. (RON and JULIET come Center.) And now**
7 **doth come the son of Montague; his name is Ron, just**
8 **home from N.Y.U. He soon will look with love on Juliet,**
9 **unaware that she's a Capulet. (The ACTORS and BETTY**
10 *come Center.')* **Now actors, Shakespeare's words will**
11 **bring alive ... (The DANCERS take Center Stage) as**
12 **dancers kick up heels to jump 'n' jive! (BRAD**
13 *GREGORY, SPIDER JOHNSON, the MAYOR and the YES*
14 *PEOPLE, and JUDY come Center.')* **But foul play is**
15 **brewing here about with evil villains moving in and**
16 **out. (The NARRATOR comes Center.) Our play is cast and**
17 **now the scene is set. Make ready, dear friends, for**
18 *Jitterbug Juliet!*

19
20 **ALL:** (*Singing*) **Come on and join the masquerade,**
21 **A Romeo and Juliet cavalcade,**
22 **The big band forties and the hit parade.**
23 **We got it all in our town!**

24
25 **GIRLS:** **Come on along, now take a ride.**
26 **Swing a little, sway a little side by side.**

27 **BOYS:** **Jitterbug, boogie woogie, slip 'n' slide,**

28 **ALL:** **We got it all in our town!**

29 **Our town! Our town!**

30 **Our town! Our town!**

31 **We got it all in our town!**

32

33 (*The entire CAST exits. Immediately, MR. MONTAGUE, loud,*
34 *is heard Off-stage Right. He then enters from right followed*
35 *closely by BETTY, a slight woman with large glasses who is*

1 *meek and quiet.*)

2 MR. MONTAGUE: What do you mean, we're double booked?

3 BETTY: Well, sir, it seems your son has booked the Verona

4 Room for his dance contest tonight and, and ...

5 MR. MONTAGUE: *(Waits.)* And what?!

6 BETTY: *(Sheepishly)* Well, Mr. Capulet had already booked

7 the room for his final rehearsal.

8 MR. MONTAGUE: *(Yelling)* Capulet! I told you never to

9 mention that name again.

10 BETTY: I'm sorry, sir. But you did ask.

11 MR. MONTAGUE: Fine. Call Cap ... you know who, and tell

12 him his rehearsal is canceled. *(As he says this, BRAD*

13 *GREGORY comes left. He is carrying a briefcase and some*

14 *papers. BRAD hears the last line.)*

15 BRAD: Whoa. Now just a minute, boss. I know you don't

16 like Mr. Cap ...

17 MR. MONTAGUE: *(Cutting him off)* Don't say that name!

18 BRAD: OK, OK. I know you don't like ... *(Thinks)* Mr. C, but

19 we made a deal with the city council. The play is a

20 benefit for the veterans of the war, and they're

21 counting on that money.

22 BETTY: Sir, the mayor told you not to fight anymore

23 with ... *(Timidly)* you-know-who.

24 MR. MONTAGUE: *(Yelling)* I know what the mayor told me.

25 But our dance contest will also help pay for the

26 Veteran's Center. *(He bites his thumb. As he does, his son*

27 *RON comes in left.)*

28 RON: Dad, are you biting your thumb?

29 MR. MONTAGUE: *(Startled)* What? *(Takes his thumb out and*

30 *looks at it.)* Yes, I suppose I am.

31 RON: Are you biting it at me? 'Cause you only do that when

32 you're upset.

33 MR. MONTAGUE: No, I'm not biting it at you. It's those darn

34 Capulets. *(Realizes what he has said.)* Arrggghhh, I've said

35 it again. *(The MAYOR enters from Stage Right. She is*

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