EDITED SCRIPT
January 14, 2011

Prologue
A Harlem Block

(1947. A Harlem New York street block. Stage Right is a club with a sign that reads "Le Hot Blu." The "e," once a part of the name, has long since burned out. Stage Left is a store with a sign that reads "Mom's Variety Store." In between are the stoops, building facades, and alleyways of the street. Above the street interiors of apartments are visible.

The SPIRIT OF HARLEM enters. In the play she appears as many characters on the fire escapes, street corners, and buildings of the neighborhood. As the show opens, SPIRIT is a streetwalker singing a haunting melody.)

#1 I'M LISTENING FOR A CHANGE

SPIRIT OF HARLEM

I'M LISTENING FOR A CHANGE

ACT I, Scene 1
The Club Le Hot Blu

(The interior of the club is visible as the lights come up on FRANKLIN GILBOA, a weathered Black man in his later forties. His clothing is mussed and his armpits are sweaty as he works on his knees scrubbing the floor of the club.)

DOES A CHANGE HAVE A SOUND

(Sitting near him in the shadows are 5 musicians, waiting to rehearse, folded over their instruments. They are: DEE DEE BOO the drummer, WILLIE the pianist, EDDIE the harmonica player, DUKE, the bass player, and PREZ, the saxophonist sits nodding in a downstage chair.)

WILL IT HANG AROUND
WITH A PROMISE THAT COMES TRUE
AT LE HOT BLU

~~(FRANKLIN rises from his knees, moves towards PREZ inventing a scat, and sings into the bell of the saxophone.)~~

~~#2 BLUE WALLS PRELUDE SCAT~~

~~(PREZ repeats FRANKLIN's phrase. DUKE responds by playing a "walking bass" line. The musical energy explodes as the drums, piano, and harmonica join in.)~~

~~#2A BLUE WALLS PRELUDE INSTRUMENTAL~~

~~(As the BAND plays, we hear two women LORNA and KATHERINE singing vocal-eeze from the dressing room. As they enter the main club room they join in.)~~

~~#2B BLUE WALLS PRELUDE SCAT 2~~

~~(Finally,~ VINCY, Franklin's 18-year old daughter enters. She is a beautiful girl just coming into her womanhood. When she sings she is mesmerizing, clearly the rising star of *Le Hot Blu*.)

#2C BLUE WALLS PRELUDE SONG

VINCY

THIS IS EV-ER-Y DAY, AN-Y DAY,
WE DON'T KNOW WHICH DAY
THIS ISN'T ALWAYS.
THIS IS SOMETIME.
MY DAD'S SPACE NOT MY PLACE.
WELCOME TO
LE (ba-be-do, be-do-ba)
HOT (da-boo-doo)
BLU-U

WITH DAD AND DEE DEE, EDDIE AND DUKE,
WILLLIE,
KATHERINE AND LORNA, AND YOU
AND THEN THERE'S PREZ.

MUSIC'S FLYIN HIGH. IT'S MY SPOTLIGHT.

THE CLUBS
A HUB OF
TRANSPA-A-RENT BLUE WALLS
WITH THE VISIONS OF A HOPE TO THE

OUT-SIDE WORLD.

MUSIC EXPANDS MY UNIVERSE.
CAR-RIES ME
BEYOND THE BLUE WALLS.

THIS IS EV-ER-Y DAY, AN-Y DAY,
WE DON'T KNOW WHICH DAY
THIS ISN'T ALWAYS.
THIS IS SOMETIME.
MY DAD'S SPACE NOT MY PLACE.
WELCOME TO
LE (ba-be-do, be do-ba)
HOT (da-boo-doo)
BLU-U

WITH DAD AND DEE DEE, EDDIE AND DUKE,
WILLIE,
KATHERINE AND LORNA, AND YOU
AND THEN THERE'S PREZ.

ALONE IN MY QUEST,
DOIN' MY BEST
MO- OO-VIN THROUGH THE
TRANS-PA-RENT BLUE WALLS.

(FRANKLIN conducts, bringing the ensemble number to a close.)

FRANKLIN

Great Tune. ~~That'll bring 'em in. It's the sound of something turning a corner. See you back here in a couple of hours.~~

~~(THE BAND disperses with the chatter of musicians on a short break.)~~

~~PREZ~~

~~Easy as a breeze today.~~

~~KATHERINE~~

~~It's a dog tune, but good for the early set. I'm fixin to see the harpie for my candy bar. You want somethin' Eddie?~~

~~EDDIE~~

~~Yeah... a payout before Friday.~~

~~WILLIE~~
~~Good luck with that. I'm cuttin out for a smoke.~~

~~EDDIE~~
~~Yeah yeah yeah. (to Katherine) Bring me a coke.~~

~~(DEE beats out licks on the drum as the lights cross fade.)~~

~~ACT I, Scene 2~~
~~The Alleyway~~

(FRANKLIN exits the club and moves into the alleyway. SPIRIT, still a streetwalker, stands near a stack of boxes.)

#3 LISTENING FOR A CHANGE REPRISE

SPIRIT OF HARLEM
IF I LISTEN TO YOU
WILL I HEAR IT
CAN YOU HEAR A CHANGE

FRANKLIN
(Seeing SPIRIT in the dark.)

Street lamp's out again...they keep saying they'll fix it.

SPIRIT
Evening Franklin!

(SPIRIT taps the street lamp and it lights!)

FRANKLIN
Dressed to the nines and nowhere to go. You sittin' pretty tonight, an me, workin'.

SPIRIT
Cool your jets. I'll be back when the bootleg's ready.

(SPIRIT exits.)

Damn those boys! Why can't they bring the boxes right to my door. We ain't contagious! Risking good liquor leaving it out here. This could walk away...its quality booze.

#4 BLACK MAN'S ALLEY

FRANKLIN
IT'S JUST THE DAMN GARBAGE

YOU'D THINK THEY COULD PUT IT IN A CAN
NO NO NO. IT'S A BLACK MAN'S ALLEY

(Action of picking up the garbage.)

JOE LOUIS OUR CHAMP THIS YEAR
LENA HORN'S SINGIN IN CARNEGIE HALL
JACKIE'S NUMBER ONE IN THE BIG LEAGUES

(Picks up more garbage.)

THE G.I BILL AND STILL
OH DAMN, I STILL GOT ME A BAD KNEE.

LIFTING AGAIN
BEEN TWO YEARS SINCE THE WAR
STILL FIGHTING IN THE BLACK MAN'S ALLEY.

THE BENEFITS
AIN'T SEEN NONE.
TRYING TO RUN A BUSINESS

WHERE'S MY LOAN
DAMN, I STILL GOT ME A BAD KNEE.

(Still more garbage.)

VINCY DREAMING.
SINGING WITH HER MOTHER'S VOICE
FREE POSSIBILITIES
MAKING A FATHER SO PROUD

CASH WILL FLOW
STREETS WILL SHINE
SOUNDS WILL FLY
WHEN I OPEN UP THE DOORS

BREATHING COLORS OF LIFE
PULSING AND A SHIMMERIING
IT'S ALL COMING FROM A BLACK MAN'S ALLEY TONIGHT

(FRANKLIN picks a bottle of liquor from one of the boxes of booze.)

FRANKLIN
(In rhythm to the outro)

This ain't no half assed white lightning neither. Open for business.

(FRANKLIN begins to un-shutter the club as the lights cross fade.)

ACT I Scene 3
On the Street

#5 NOTHING PERSONAL MUSIC IN

(TICO, a well-dressed Italian man enters from the shadows and knocks on the door of on a basement apartment.)

TICO

Ya there?

(O'REILLY, dressed in the garb of the working class, emerges.)

OREILLY

Yeah

TICO

How'd it go.

OREILLY

Stu says Franklin won't give. He only wants to buy quality stuff.

TICO

It's a shame. All the other's are comin' through. Buildin' business.

OREILLY

He's not budging.

TICO

It's time to drop the dime on Franklin.

OREILLY

You serious?

TICO

He's steppin on my toes. Makin' me look bad. Shut him down.

OREILY

Come again?

TICO

Shut him down.

OREILLY

With what? Shivs? I can't bloody the streets like that.

TICO

Nah...bogus beef. Talk to the boys downtown. Have them do something about the slime around here. Citations...tickets... use your noggin'. I got plans for this neighborhood.

#5 IT'S NOTHING PERSONAL

TICO

I CUT EAR TO EAR
NOTHING'S BETTER THAN
A BULLET IN THE BACK OF THE HEAD
YOU NEVER EVEN HAVE TO SEE THEIR FACE.

IT"S NOTHING PERSONAL

STUFFING PEOPLE BEHIND A WALL, I'M NOT A MASON
I'M BETTER THAN THAT
WHEN I STICK 'EM, EYES CLOSED, THEY DIE

IT'S NOTHING PERSONAL
I'M GROWIN OLD WITH NOTHING TO SHOW

I COULD BE DEAD SOON
PUSHIN UP DAISIES
SOMETHINGS GOTTA CHANGE

(whistles)

I'M LOOKING FOR A SPOT
THAT IS HOT TO TURN INTO MY OWN.

(whistles)

MUSICIANS ARE TINY ROACHES
SIGN EM UP, STOMP EM, SPIT 'EM OUT

NOW I'M ONLY TAKING CARE OF MYSELF I HAVE A PLAN

(Katherine passes on her way to the club eating a candy bar.)

THAT PIECE OF ASS WALKING UP THOUGH HERE
SHE' A NOTHING BUT A COLORFUL MOTH
FULL OF THE CRAP THAT PEOPLE FEED HER
I'VE GOT A SURPRISE FOR HER

MUSICIANS ARE TINY ROACHES
RUNNING SHITFACED, NOTHING PRESSED, NOTHING WASHED.

WALKING THE STREETS LIKE VERMIN
SIGN EM UP, STOMP EM, SPIT 'EM OUT

NOW I'M ONLY TAKING CARE OF MYSELF I HAVE A PLAN

[I CUT EAR TO EAR
NOTHING'S BETTER THAN A BULLET
IN THE BACK OF THE HEAD
YOU NEVER EVEN HAVE TO SEE THEIR FACE.]

IT"S NOTHING PERSONAL
IT"S NOTHING PERSONAL
IT"S NOTHING PERSONAL

ACT I, Scene 4
The Dressing Room

(This is a side storage room to Le Hot Blu where the women dress away from the men. The sound of the stride piano comes through the door at KATHERINE and LORNA settle in and prepare for the rehearsal.)

KATHERINE

We need to run those other songs. Vincy come out the loo yet?.

LORNA

She's on her way.

(VINCY enters the room. She sits without speaking, looks away.)

KATHERINE

Want some candy?

VINCY

Nah

LORNA
(to Katherine)
What's wrong with her tonight?

(KATHERINE shrugs.)

VINCY

Will you all stop looking at me!

KATHERINE
We ain't lookin at you. We're wondering what's wrong with you. Can't you be civil?

VINCY

I'm fine.

KATHERINE
Leave her alone. We've got a set coming up. She's probably just tired of Franklin riding her ass. Heaven knows I wouldn't want to work for him and then live with him too.

VINCY
He's allright. He's my dad. He's got his ways.

LORNA

Sure does.

VINCY

And it's taking me nowheres.

LORNA

Well where you want to go honey?

#6 ON MY OWN

VINCY

I WANT TO GO AWAY FROM HERE
WHERE I CAN DO THINGS ON MY OWN
WITHOUT THE JEERS AND THE "GET OVAH HERE'S"
AND THE HURRY AND FINISH THE SONG

I NEED TO ESCAPE TO A ROOM OF MY OWN
WHERE THE LIGHT SHINES BRIGHT
AND I SCAT MY OWN SONG

A ROOM WITH A TABLE OF FINE LINEN CLOTH
AND MAKEUP AND JEWELS TO PUT IN MY HAIR

NOT A TIRED OLD BAR
WHERE THE MEN SIT AND HOLLER
FOR MORE BOOZE AND BABES AND A DOLLAR.

(O.S. 'sing 'Meloncholy Baby')

I WANT TO GO AWAY FROM HERE
WHERE I CAN DO THINGS ON MY OWN
WITHOUT THE JEERS AND THE "GET OVAH HERE'S"
AND THE HURRY AND FINISH THE SONG
FOR MORE BOOZE AND BABES AND A DOLLAR.

I CAN DO THINGS ON MY OWN

LORNA
You need to stop that Vincy. Your Dad's given his life for you.

KATHERINE
Since your Mom died all he ever talks about is Vincy and what she'll become.

VINCY
But it's what he wants me to be. I got my own plans.

KATHERINE
Like what.

VINCY
Like it's none of your bizz-ness

LORNA
You acting mighty sassy for a 17 year old.

VINCY
I'm 18!

LORNA
And running off at the mouth like you know something about life.

KATHERINE
That's enough. Get dressed Vincy. I can't concentrate with all that yappin'.

~~(DEE DE BOO sticks his head in through the dressing room door.)~~

~~DEE DEE BOO~~

~~Hey, you girls ready in there?~~

~~KATHERINE~~

~~Give us a minute.~~

ACT I Scene 5
Mom' Variety Store

(Sounds come from Le Hot Blu as MOM an attractive woman in her late forties, closes the cash register. DOC, her son, appears from the downstairs storage room carrying boxes.)

MOM

Was that so difficult?

DOC

They were right there Mom.

MOM

Now don't forget to sweep the basement.

DOC

I don't have time Mom. I'm gotta go.

MOM

Go where?

DOC

Nowhere. Everywhere. Somewhere OK!

MOM

You make no sense. If your father were here maybe he'd slap some sense into you. Me. I'm too tired to raise my hand.

(DOC doesn't respond.)

You know Ethel Ackerman said she saw you hanging out for an hour doing nothing in front of that club. What are you doing? Daydreaming your life away?

(DOC rises to leave.)

MOM

Ok so you're not gonna sweep now. After you put away the boxes go. Go to temple. Go say your prayers. Go go go. Go ask the Rabbi for some guidance.

DOC

Another day Mom.

MOM
(irritated) Another day??? Not Today. What else you gonna do? Sit around and wait for the coloreds to give you the right time of day. If your father were here he would...

DOC
Geez. You're too much! I gotta let some steam off.

(DOC slams the door of the candy store and goes into the street.)

#7 SHE GOES ON AND ON AND ON AND ON

DOC
PISSED AT MOM FREAKING TRAPPED
GOTTA GO GOTTA GET OUTTA HERE
DOWN THE BLOCK GET SOME AIR
LET ME GO I GOTTA GET AWAY

AND SHE GOES ON AND ON AND ON AND ON

LIVING IN A CANDY STORE
WONDERING EVERYDAY
WHEN I'LL GET A CHANCE TO WALK AWAY

AND SHE GOES ON AND ON AND ON AND ON

NO NEW CLOTHES. FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTING CANDLES
LET ME GO I CAN'T TAKE IT NO MORE.

SUPPOSED TO BE A MAN AT EIGHTEEN
SITTING UP UNDER MY MOTHER'S COUNTER
NO DATES NO CAR
SATURDAY MORNING SHULE

AND SHE GOES ON AND ON AND ON AND ON

I COULD KICK A CAN. SKIN A CAT
BREAK A WINDOW. SLAM A DOOR.
PUNCH THE WALL. KNOCK SOMEBODY OUT.
BLOW UP THE WORLD

I CAN'T TAKE IT NO MORE.

All that's for kids

I'LL MAKE MY OWN RECORD

HAVE MY OWN BAND. TAKE IT ON THE ROAD
BE ON THE COVER OF DOWNBEAT MAGAZINE
PLAY ON THE RADIO LIVE! AND BE FREE

WHAT ABOUT MOM

SHE CAN SIT IN THE WINDOW
STARE AT THE SKY
KEEP A TEAR IN HER EYE
YELLING AT THE DOOR

BUT I! I CAN'T TAKE NO MORE

ACT I Scene 6
On the Street

(DOC sits on a stoop as Franklin exits the club talking over his shoulder.)

~~FRANKLIN~~
~~Don't worry about it Duke. Eddie'll be here any minute with the cash.~~

~~(FRANKLIN sees DOC)~~

FRANKLIN
Doc Henshel!

(DOC stands.)

You're gettin' tall boy. How's your Mom?

DOC
She's OK.

FRANKLIN
What cha doin' out here?

DOC
Just sittin'

FRANKLIN
Sittin' huh. That's youth for you. It's the worse time of anybody's life. Later you can see the beauty in it cause you don't have to go through it no more.

(There is a cry, and the sound of commotion offstage.)

Trouble! Doc, your Mom could probably use a hand at the store.

(Two loud gunshots ring out.)

DOC

(rising) Hey!

FRANKLIN

Uh oh. Ya better stay put!

(FRANKLIN heads offstage as EDDIE stumbles out holding his leg. He has been shot.)

FRANKLIN

Eddie!

(DEE DEE BOO and DUKE emerge from the dressing room of the club, which is in the alley.)

~~FRANKLIN~~

~~Dee Dee - Duke - over here!~~

(MOM peeks through the window of the candy store.)

MOM

DOC!! Where are you? Get over here now. Come inside?

(DOC moves toward the men gathered around EDDIE)

DOC

Eddie! What happened! Eddie.

~~DEE DEE~~

~~Get lost kid.~~

MOM

Doc!

(DOC hesitates, then runs to the candy store. FRANKLIN tends to EDDIE with DEE DEE and DUKE.)

EDDIE

White guy... big. He made tracks fast.

DUKE

Gimme a hanky.

(DEE DEE passes him a handkerchief)

Dego?

(EDDIE nods)

FRANKLIN

Gimme that. (Holding Eddie) Just stay still man.

DUKE

Someone with a popper on the wrong side of the tracks

EDDIE

The payroll.

FRANKLIN

Gone?

EDDIE

They...

FRANKLIN

It's come to this.

EDDIE

Hurts.

(SAN JUAN JOE appears from around the corner, eyes the scene, and backs away.)

FRANKLIN

Get him out of here. Find a doctor.

~~(DEE DEE and DUKE begin dragging EDDIE towards the dressing room door. FRANKLIN spots SAN JUAN.)~~

~~Just stand back.~~

~~(SAN JUAN moves into the shadows as the men carry EDDIE inside. SPIRIT enters and approaches SAN JUAN.)~~

~~SPIRIT~~

~~You holding?~~

~~SAN JUAN~~

~~You buying? I got nickel bags.~~

~~SPIRIT~~

~~Not me. Not tonight. Not on these streets. Cops'll be here soon.~~

~~SAN JUAN~~

~~I'd better ankle on then...~~

(SAN JUAN exits as VINCY enters the street from the front door of Le Hot Blu. She is visibly upset.)

#8 A DAY FIGHT IN HARLEM

SPIRIT
BE PATIENT PEOPLE SAY. DON'T ARGUE. NO TEARS.

VINCY
THIS IS ALL TOO MUCH
VIOLENCE. BLOOD
FRIENDSHIPS SHATTERED
BLOOD. THE POP OF A GUN

SPIRIT
BE PATIENT PEOPLE SAY. DON'T ARGUE. NO TEARS.

VINCY and SPIRIT
A DAY FIGHT IN HARLEM
SOMEONE GETS STABBED
SOMEONE RUNS.
WHERE DID HE GET THE GUN
WAS THERE NO OBJECTION?

SPIRIT
BE PATIENT PEOPLE SAY. DON'T ARGUE. NO TEARS.

VINCY
FUNERALS INSIDE MY HEAD
LOST MY MOTHER
SHE'S LONG DEAD
NEW YORK'S COLD STREETS
LOOKING BLOOD RED

I THOUGHT I LEFT BEHIND THE WAILIN PROCESSION
IN HOT HUMID SOUTH WHERE I CAME FROM

SPIRIT
THIS IS MY BLOCK THIS IS ME
WITH FEAR I ACCOMODATE YOU WANDERERS.
THIS STREET LEADS SOMEWHERE ELSE.

VINCY
BE PATIENT PEOPLE SAY. DON'T ARGUE. NO TEARS.

SPIRIT
IT'S NO ONE WAY DEAD END.
IT WILL TAKE YOU SOMEHOW SOMEWHERE

VINCY
THERE'S DEATH ALL AROUND.

SPIRIT OF HARLEM
THAT'S WHAT WAS

VINCY
COLD STREETS, HARD STREETS.

SPIRIT OF HARLEM
THIS IS WHAT IS.

VINCY
FUNERAL'S INSIDE MY HEAD

SPIRIT OF HARLEM
THIS STREET LEADS SOMEWHERE ELSE.
IT'S NO ONE WAY DEAD END.
IT WILL TAKE YOU SOMEHOW SOMEWHERE

SPIRIT OF HARLEM and VINCY
WHEN. WHERE.
DOES THE STREET LEAD SOMEWHERE ELSE

(The ensemble sings offstage)

ENSEMBLE
A DAY FIGHT IN HARLEM
SOMEONE GETS STABBED
SOMEONE RUNS.
WHERE DID HE GET THE GUN
WAS THERE NO OBJECTION?

THIS IS MY BLOCK THIS IS OUR HOME
WITH FEAR I ACCOMODATE THE WANDERERS.
BE PATIENT PEOPLE SAY
DON'T ARGUE. NO TEARS.

A DAY FIGHT IN HARLEM
SOMEONE GETS STABBED
SOMEONE RUNS.

(Sound of a police siren. Lights fade. Time passes.)

~~**ACT I, Scene 7**~~
~~**In Front of Le Hot Blu**~~

~~(PREZ, DEE DEE, and WILLIE huddled in front of Le Hot Blu smoking and passing a bottle.)~~

~~WILLIE~~

~~Pass me that. You already teed.~~

~~PREZ~~

~~I ain't finished my taste.~~

~~WILLIE~~

~~Let it lay. (PREZ hands him the bottle and he drinks.) Mmmmm.~~

~~DEE DEE~~

~~They tried to chill Eddie man. For some chump change.~~

~~WILLIE~~

~~He'll be allright. Duke ran him ovah to the doctor in his cab like a boulevard cowboy.~~

~~PREZ~~

~~Who's gonnna cover with Eddie clipped.~~

~~WILLIE~~

~~Ain't no problem. We can still run the changes if you hold the line.~~

~~PREZ~~

~~If I hold it... shi-i-i-i-i-t....you know me. I'm-ma blast it .~~

~~DEE DEE~~

~~The sucker took the cash and I needs my pay. God knows I'm flat broke – almost on my ass.~~

~~WILLIE~~

~~Don't sweat it. Franklin will cover us~~

~~DEE DEE~~

~~How's he gonna do that? He's in bondage. Can't even cover his own note. If we don't make the box this weekend we're in the streets like alley rats.~~

~~WILLIE~~

~~Don't sweat it!~~

~~PREZ~~

~~Put it away. Here he comes.~~

~~(FRANKLIN ambles up the block. All look towards him.)~~

~~WILLIE~~

~~So is he kicking? Will he make it?~~

~~FRANKLIN~~

~~We'll see in the morning. Let's call it a night.~~

~~(Lights fade to black.)~~

ACT I Scene 8
Mom's Variety Store and the stoop outside.

(The next day on the block. Franklin crosses to Stage Left and enters into the Candy Store. MOM is rolling coins behind the counter.)

MOM

Morning Franklin. How're things going?

FRANKLIN

As well as to be expected.

(FRANKLIN grabs copy of *Downbeat* from the magazine stand and opens it.)

MOM

Heard there was shooting out there last night.

FRANKLIN

We had some trouble.

MOM

I guess so at a place like yours.

FRANKLIN

Is Doc OK?

MOM

He was all shook up. The boy can't even walk the streets without risking his life. You outta do something about that crowd you bring in.

FRANKLIN

They're just neighborhood folks. Looking for a good time.

MOM

We don't need folks like that in this neighborhood.

FRANKLIN

It's business. I'm in front of the situation.

MOM

(Watching FRANKLIN with the magazines.)

Those magazines are for sale Franklin.

(FRANKLIN puts the magazine down.)

It was that boy who works for you, wasn't it. The one who used to run the streets with Doc.

FRANKLIN

Yeah. Rosa's child.

MOM

Those two together are made for trouble. I'll never forget the day the police brought them into the shop...oh my god....Officer O'Reilly coming in here. Saying he caught the two of them sneaking into Miss Suzie's dance place, banging on the piano. As if my boy would do something like that.

FRANKLIN

They didn't mean no harm Ida. They were just being kids.

MOM

I had to give that man money to keep him from charging them with breaking and entering.

FRANKLIN

Kids with a passion for the ivory keys.

~~(MOM comes out from behind the counter.)~~

FRANKLIN

Eddie's a tough one. He'll be on his feet before you know it.

(Stage Right lights up on VINCY who sits on the stoop dejected with her head in her hands. DOC enters with a small ball.)

DOC

Hey Vincy, cheer up. I'm getting ready to play some ball.

VINCY

Isn't there another stoop?

DOC

This is best stoop. You know that. C'mon, let's play ball. Who's up? You wanna bat or you wanna play the field. Bet you can't score on me.

VINCY

That's kid stuff. I don't do that anymore.

DOC

Why not?

VINCY

Cause things aren't the same. I got better things to do.

DOC

No you don't. I'm up.

(VINCY moves out of the way as DOC throws the ball against the stoop. She instinctively catches it with one hand.)

VINCY

One out!

(Lights cross fade to the candy store.)

FRANKLIN

Ida, how you been getting along since Max passed? Must be hard handling the hardware and the boy at the same time. I see him sitting out there on the stoop like he don't know where to go. What direction to turn.

MOM

~~Can you help me move this ladder Franklin? I need to bring that box of rat traps down from the top shelf.~~

~~(FRANKLIN rises to help.)~~

~~FRANKLIN~~

~~Seems like your son should be doing chores like that to help ya out.~~

~~MOM~~

~~When he's around he does what he can. He's not like his Dad...has a streak of wanderlust that won't let go. He's a wonderful musician though. You should hear him upstairs. He could settle down, learn some Mozart. Maybe go to school. Minding the store is a good business and Max would want that for him, but he just doesn't seem suited for it.~~

~~FRANKLIN~~

~~Does he read charts?~~

~~MOM~~

~~What didya say Franklin?~~

~~FRANKLIN~~

~~Charts. You know music.~~

~~MOM~~

~~I don't know. What do I know about song and dance. You're the one running a road house over there.~~

~~FRANKLIN~~

~~It's a business! I'm nurturing talent is what I'm doing. Taking care of my daughter like her mother asked me to. My baby girl is something. When Caroline sent me that letter she told me all about how Vincy has an itching for the finer things in life. And a fine set of lungs to match. Three long years...I come back from the war ready to see my little girl... and she's all grown up. Then Caroline's gone, and there's nothing I can do to bring her back. Vincy's all I got. And when she sings the sound of the chords bend the rafters. And the customers practically break down the doors. She's my only baby now.~~

~~MOM~~

~~It's a shame you let that young girl be exposed to drunks like that.~~

~~FRANKLIN~~

~~Ida. Let it go. Don't run my business and I won't run yours.~~

~~MOM~~

~~Thanks for the help Franklin.~~

~~FRANKLIN~~

~~Watch yourself there!~~

~~(Lights up on the stoop with DOC and VINCY. The sound of the ball on the stoop is regular.)~~

~~VINCY~~

~~Three outs. My turn.~~

~~(DOC hands VINCY the ball.)~~

~~DOC~~

~~Thought you didn't like this "kids" game.~~

~~VINCY~~

~~I like it cause I always win.~~

~~DOC~~

~~You wish.~~

~~(VINCY throws the ball against the stoop and it flies as DOC tries to catch it. He awkwardly runs into a garbage can that makes a loud noise. He recovers and picks up the ball.)~~

~~VINCY~~

~~Maybe you should stick to playin' the piano Meeellllvin.~~

~~DOC~~

~~Don't call me that. I hate that.~~

~~VINCY~~

~~Well why do you use that stupid name? Doc. You're not a doctor.~~

~~DOC~~

~~Mom just calls me that. She wants me to be a doctor. Says I'm always fixing things. All I want to do is play the piano.~~

~~(DOC hands VINCY the ball. She throws it again and he catches it.)~~

~~Wish I could fix my life. Every day I'm on the keys. Never seems worth it. Nobody ever listens to me.~~

~~VINCY~~

~~Give me the ball. Someday they'll listen.~~

~~DOC~~

~~Maybe.~~

~~VINCY~~

~~With music you've got to do what your soul tells you. You know. Dig deep.~~

~~DOC~~

~~Yeah right.~~

~~(He hands VINCY the ball. She sits down on the stoop.)~~

~~VINCY~~

~~When we usta play at Miss Suzie's you would always dig deep. Those were the good times. The three of us – you, me, and Eddie pretending to be a big band.~~

~~DOC~~

~~That was kid's stuff. Are we gonna play?~~

~~(Lights cross fade to the candy store.)~~

FRANKLIN

So have ya paid your respects to Max lately? I sure do miss him. He was an honorable man.

MOM

I pray every week at the service.

FRANKLIN

Even when he was holding out on poker night you knew he would pay up honest.

MOM

You talking about gambling Franklin?

FRANKLIN

No. Poker.

MOM

The smoke, the mess, I always thought you guys would come to blows.

FRANKLIN

That's the way you saw it. But it was just poker.

MOM

I just never understood.

FRANKLIN

Men have their secrets

MOM

And women have theirs.

#9 BUDDING DELILAH

Intro

YOU MEN THINK THAT YOU ALL ARE LIVIN' THE LIFE
WITH YOUR WARS AND YOUR GAMBLING AND CARS.

WE WOMEN HAVE SECRETS WE SHARE WITH OURSELVES
THAT HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH THE BARS.

WHEN THE MUSIC IS PLAYING
AND LAUGHTER IS SWAYING
THE GENTS WITH THEIR DREAMS OF AFFECTION.

WE WOMEN HAVE SECRETS WE SHARE WITH OURSELVES
THAT HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH THE BARS.

Song

WE FIND OUR OWN SPACE
AND BEGIN TO PLACE ON
OOH THE MAKEUP, THE LIPSTICK THE SHADOWS

WHEN WE LOOK IN THE MIRROR
WE SIGH AND WE REALIZE
A BUDDING DELILAH
LIVES UNDER THE WRINKLES
JUST WATCH HER EYES CRINKLE

A BUDDING DELILAH
INSPIRED BY COLOR
OF RED RIPE ROSE LIPSTICK AND PEARLS.

SHE'S A GIRL. SHE'S A WOMAN.
A BUDDING DELILAH
A LADY WHO'S MEANT TO TAKE FLIGHT.
AS SHE WORKS WITH THE MIRROR
A BUDDING DELILAH
IN SOFT PRIVATE PLACES OF NIGHT.

WE FIND OUR OWN SPACE
AND BEGIN TO PLACE ON
OOH THE MAKEUP, THE LIPSTICK THE SHADOWS

A BUDDING DELILAH
INSPIRED BY COLOR
OF RED RIPE ROSE LIPSTICK AND PEARLS.

FRANKLIN
Ida. You spend too much time alone. You need some company around here. I'll have one of the girls come by to visit you. Maybe Vincy'll take you shopping or something.

(He opens the shop door.)

Thanks for the magazine

MOM
Franklin you've got some nerve...

~~(The lights fade out on the Candy Store and up on the stoop where VINCY and DOC are sitting.)~~

~~VINCY~~
~~I gotta go. Thanks for the game.~~

~~DOC~~
~~You singing tonight?~~

~~VINCY~~
~~Of course.~~

~~DOC~~
~~Wish it were me playing.~~

~~VINCY~~
~~You'll get your chance. Who knows where the streets will take you Doc.~~

~~(VINCY exits leaving DOC behind. FRANKLIN, leaving the Candy Store, passes DOC on the stoop.)~~

DOC
Mr. Gilboa...Franklin. Can I talk to you for a second?

FRANKLIN
Make it quick.

DOC

I want to ask you for a favor.

FRANKLIN

What is it Doc.

DOC

Mr. Gilboa, can you give me a job?

FRANKLIN

Job? There's plenty of boxes for you to lift over at your Mom's store.

DOC

No! I mean playing. I hear the sounds coming from Le Hot and I got this new sound in my head...my heart...my hands, Franklin can you let me play at the club?

FRANKLIN

Boy...Melvin...

DOC

It's all I want, all I dream about.

FRANKLIN

Playing huh. Go on inside. I'll see what you can do.

ACT I Scene 9
The Club Le Hot Blu

(FRANKLIN shakes his head as DOC nervously follows him into the club where the band is ready for rehearsal. The Boppettes, VINCY, KATHERINE and LORNA, are in dressing robes practicing some dance moves on the stage. WILLIE noodles at the piano. DUKE, PREZ, and DEE DEE BOO sit at a corner table playing cards)

KATHERINE

Well look what just walked in.

LORNA

Inside the club instead of out on the stoop. I wonder what he wants?

~~DUKE~~

~~Take a look at this Dee Dee. It's the yid kid from next door.~~

FRANKLIN

~~Shut your trap Duke. It's Ida's son. Willie!~~ I want you to try him out.

~~WILLIE~~

~~Do what....~~

~~(FRANKLIN shoots him a look.)~~

~~WILLIE~~

~~Got it.~~

~~(DOC moves towards the piano as the band members look him up and down.)~~

~~OK. Try the first tune up there.~~

~~(DOC just stands frozen.)~~

You can read can't you?

DOC

Sure.

#10 THE AUDITION

FRANKLIN

'Love Is Like A Shadow' ouuu. wee. About here…1..2..3..and

(DOC nervously plays the intro stiffly.)

FRANKLIN

Hold it.

(DOC stops as FRANKLIN leans over to show him.)

Here. Try it again. Reach down deep. Like this. Play some riffs in the holes.

(FRANKLIN plays for a few bars. DOC gets it and repeats what FRANKLIN plays, adding a 'classical' improv, sounding a Chopin nocturne that swings.)

FRANKLIN

OK. Not bad at all. Let me hear you play the tune for real.

(DOC continues to play. VINCY begin to sing quietly.)

VINCY

LOVE IS LIKE A SHADOW LIKES TO STEAL AWAY
MOVES IN FOR A FASCINATING SECOND
LEAVES YOU ON A RAINY DAY.
GRAB HOLD AND HANG ON. SWEARING TO BE TRUE.

(VINCY moves towards the piano on stage and looks over DOC's shoulder, coaxing him on.)

ALL THAT'S THERE TO REMEMBER
IS THE HOPE OF SOMETHING NEW.
SOMEHOW MAYBE NOW,
THE CHASE IT WILL END AND
LOVE WILL FIND ITS WAY TO YOU.

~~(DOC plays a dynamic riff, a la Art Tatum, that stops VINCY mid song. DOC is not aware as FRANKLIN looks at VINCY.)~~

~~FRANKLIN~~
~~Hold it. (laughing) Man, you got to show me that riff. I know it ain't yours.~~

~~**MUSIC OUT**~~

~~DOC~~
~~(in a daze)~~
~~For sure not, Willie. That's an Art Tatum riff I learned off one his records.~~

~~VINCY~~
~~I never heard you do that before.~~

~~(VINCY's presence embarrasses DOC and he backs away from the piano. As he looks around he catches FRANKLIN's eye.)~~

~~DOC~~
~~So whatdya say? Can I sit in sometimes, you know, wood shed with the rest of the band?~~

~~FRANKLIN~~
~~Well Mr. Doc, sounds like those feelers of yours might be able to play out some tunes. We got plenty musicians round here, but it wouldn't hurt to have a different kind of sound.~~

~~DUKE~~
~~Ah Frank, You're not gonna…Eddie'll be back.~~

~~FRANKLIN~~

~~You know, if you were to play here, you might draw in a different kinda money - a different clientele.~~

~~DUKE~~
~~It's hard enough making my rent without having to share tips with a punk kid.~~

~~DEE DEE BOO~~
~~As long as he keeps in it the pocket, they'll be enough money for everybody.~~

~~(THE BAND looks as if they aren't so sure.)~~

FRANKLIN
~~You get goin' kid and find some decent threads~~. We've got a late set. Tonight's your break.

DOC
You mean it?

FRANKLIN
I gotta get this place cleaned up. There are satin doll's coming tonight.

DOC
I promise I won't let you down.

ACT I Scene 10
On the Street

(DOC speeds out of the club as the band members begin to clean up. He moves through the streets spinning and jumping on every object that he can find.)

#11 HARLEM TIME

DOC
IT'S HARLEM TIME. I'M JUST ON HARLEM TIME
THERE'S ALWAYS A LATE SHOW. IT'S NEVER TOO EARLY
I'M ON HARLEM TIME.
YES SHE'S MY SATIN DOLL.
I GIVE HER ALL MY ALL.
THEN I'LL CLING TOGETHER AS SHE SPINS ME 'TIL DAWN.

THERE'S A PLACE SO CLOSE YET FAR AWAY FROM HERE.
I CAN FEEL IT. I CAN HEAR IT. IT'S DANCIN' IN MY EAR.
IT'S A PLACE WHERE I CAN BE FREE.
YES A PLACE THAT LET'S ME FLY FREE.

YES A PLACE WHERE I AM FREE.
THAT IS ALL I WANT TO BE.

(SAN JUAN JOE appears on the street with SPIRIT, PREZ, and KATHERINE. They set up for a dice game.)

IT'S HARLEM TIME. I'M JUST ON HARLEM TIME.
I'M ROLLIN' THE DICE. PAYING DUES THAT'S THE PRICE.
IT'S HARLEM TIME.
I'LL WATCH THE NIGHT MOVE IN
HARLEM IT BURNS MY SOUL.
I WILL FIND THE GROOVE BEFORE THE MOON TURNS COLD.

TAKE A TURN. DOWN THE BLOCK.
THERE'S A SIGN WITH A DOOR UNLOCKED
CATCH THE RHYTHM. FEEL MY HEART BEAT.

I'M COMIN' JUST WAIT FOR ME.
IT'S A PLACE WHERE I AM ME.
YES A PLACE THAT LETS ME FLY FREE.
YES THAT'S ALL I WANT TO BE.
YEAH A PLACE I CAN BE ME.

(DOC exits into the candy store and runs upstairs to get dressed. We see the shadows as he changes, then the lights cross fade to the alleyway.)

MUSIC OUT

ACT I, Scene 11
In the Alleyway

(TICO in the alleyway knocking on the BOPPETTE dressing room door. LORNA answers.)

TICO
Is Ms. Gilboa there? The singer? I'd like ta speak with her.

LORNA
You ain't got no business around here.

TICO
Now how would you know that? Just get the lady out here.

(LORNA looks doubtful, but calls into the dressing room.)

LORNA

Vincy! Vince there's a "gentleman" here to see ya.

(VINCY comes to the door in a dressing robe. TICO eyes her up and down.)

TICO

Miss Gilboa. I'm new to the neighborhood and I've heard you're a promising young singah – a headliner. (looking at her legs) With some real talents.

VINCY

I been singing here a while.

TICO

My scouts say you're good. Really good, I'm gonna watch you tonight. See how you do. If it's good, I'll have someone bring ya to my place so you can see my set up.

VINCY

What kind of setup?

TICO

Fancy place. Downtown. A place where the labels come through and sign up singers.

VINCY

I don't know about set ups.

TICO

Look, If ya want, I can give ya an official tryout time right now...say Sattiday.

VINCY

I'd have to check with my Dad.

TICO

Forget about that. Just tell me what time you're free and I'll find ya. We'll make it work.

VINCY

I guess so...

LORNA (from inside)

Vin...cy.. whatcha doing out there Vincy?

VINCY

I'll be right there. (to TICO) Ok, look maybe if we can do it somewhere close...

TICO

Sure...no problem.

VINCY

Great.

TICO

Just one thing...

VINCY

Gotta go...

TICO

Won't take but a second. Just write your name heah sayin' you agree to the tryout.

VINCY

Why...

TICO

So's I can have everything all set up for ya.

VINCY

Yeah Ok. That makes sense.

(VINCY signs the form.)

I gotta go.

TICO

Sure ya do,. A girl like you is goin' places. I'll see ya around. Sing good tonight.

(VINCY disappears into the dressing room.)

ACT I Scene 12
The Club Le Hot Blu

(First set at the club. The BAND is playing a up tempo "pop" commercial tune with DOC on the piano. FRANKLIN supervises the band and the bar. SPIRIT sits at the bar getting a drink. TICO is poised in the shadows, listening to the act.)

#12 LITTLE OLD NEW YORK

VINCY

MY MAN HE DRIVES A CADDY. HIS PINSTRIPES DRIVE ME BATTY
ON VALENTINE'S DAY
HE GIVES ME HIS HEART IN A DIAMOND.

KATHERINE
THINGS ARE SO FINE IN LITTLE OLD NEW YORK.

BOPPETTES
HARLEM, U.S.A. BY THE RIVER, WE COULD SAY.

VINCY
MY MAN HE'S GOT A TERRACE.
FIFTY STORIES HIGH

LORNA
A VIEW OF CENTRAL PARK THAT SHIMMERS IN THE DARK.

KATHERINE
THE WINE IS SO FINE IN LITTLE OLD NEW YORK.

BOPPETTES
HARLEM, U.S.A. BY THE RIVER, WE ALL SAY.

VINCY
HEY MAMA HOWS THE MOON IN

BOPETTES
SOUTH CAROLINA

VINCY
I'LL BE HOME ON A MORNING TRAIN

MY MAN HE BUYS ME DRESSES, PERFUMES BY THE SCORE.
HE GIVES ME PLENTY MONEY. ON SUNDAY GIVES ME MORE.

WANDA
THE LOVIN IS SO FINE IN LITTLE OLD NEW YORK.

KATHERINE
HARLEM, U.S.A. BY THE RIVER, WE ALL SAY

VINCY
HEY MAMA, WARM MY BED DOWN IN SOUTH CAROLINA
I MISS THE DREAMS THAT EVENING BRINGS

LORNA
UNDER THAT OLD WEEPING WILLOW TREE

VINCY

HEY MAMA, POP THE BISCUITS IN

BOPPETTES
SOUTH CAROLINA

VINCY
I MISS THAT BLUEBIRD SINGIN' BY THE RIVER.

MY MAN HE DRIVES A CADDY. HIS PINSTRIPES DRIVE ME BATTY
ON VALENTINE'S DAY HE GIVES ME HIS HEART IN A DIAMOND.

KATHERINE
THINGS ARE SO FINE IN LITTLE OLD NEW YORK

BOPPETTES
HARLEM, U.S.A. BY THE RIVER YOU COULD SAY.

VINCY
YEAH WHAT A TOWN. WHAT A WONDERFUL TOWN.
ALL THE VIEWS THAT ARE MADE JUST FOR TWO.

BOPPETTES
IN HARLEM U.S.A.

(As VINCY scats out, the lights shift, and the mood settles into a more-after-hours feel. The music turns to bebop. The band members shift places and DOC and VINCY "jam" together while the rest of the band member support their passionate, experimental riffs. As things heat up to their highest tones, the lights slowly fade while the music continues in the darkness.)

MUSIC OUT

ACT I, Scene 13
Late night near the Dressing Room Door

(DOC and VINCY emerge from the dressing room door just after the set finishes. They are hot, sweaty, and exhilarated.)

VINCY
Need some air.

DOC

Me too!

VINCY

That... you...were fantastic

DOC

It was the way I've always dreamed it...the sounds, the sounds, everything fell together like Bird with Mc Shannon. Did you hear Dee Dee on those breaks.

VINCY

And Prez, he was so high. I don't know he shapes those tones and swings at the same time.

DOC

Can we do it again?

VINCY

I want to. Except...

(VINCY pauses and looks in the shadows where TICO was.)

DOC

Except what! I'd play for you until the moon don't shine.

VINCY

Will you? Wherever I go?

DOC

Sure!

(VINCY considers)

VINCY

It's getting late. I've got to talk to Dad.

DOC

I'll wait right here.

VINCY

No. I'll see you tomorrow. We can run through some numbers? I've got some ideas I want to try out. Is your afternoon good?

DOC

Sure... yeah. I mean...tomorrow. I'll come over after I finish helping Mom with the deliveries.

(DOC looks back at VINCY as she hurries through the dressing room door.)

ACT I, Scene 14
The Club Le Hot Blu

(Lights up on the interior of the club where FRANKLIN, DUKE, DEE DEE, and WILLIE are closing up.)

FRANKLIN

Hey baby. Where have ya been? We're just finishing up. Dee Dee. Put those bottles behind the counter!

VINCY

You oughta sit down Dad. Rest your knee.

FRANKLIN

Not now. I feel like dancing. The music was blastin' tonight. You and Ida's kid were something ...you all gave birth.

VINCY

Dad I have something to tell you.

FRANKLIN

Is this important?

(VINCY nods.)

FRANKLIN

OK. (calling) Duke – you can stash the stuff in your cab now. (to Vincy) Shoot...

VINCY

Dad, remember how I was saying I could use some more money.

FRANKLIN

Yeah, I 'member that. And I said you don't pay rent so what'cha need money for. I give ya something for singing. With that pocket change you can buy a nice dress or go down to Lohman's.

VINCY

I don't mean like that. I mean real money. This place isn't real. It's just a bar. It's a hangout where neighborhood folks come to pass the time.

FRANKLIN

What are you saying Vincy?

VINCY

Dad...I...

FRANKLIN

Gimme some sugar honey. Rest you mind. I got something to show you.

VINCY

I need to change...

FRANKLIN

Just take a breather.

(VINCY reluctantly settles into a chair as FRANKLIN searches behind the counter until he finds an old photo album.)

FRANKLIN

(FRANKLIN brings the book to VINCY.)

Here...here it is.

VINCY

(removing her shoes) Ohh, my feet hurt.

FRANKLIN

Take a look. It's something I been saving for you. Something your mother left you.

VINCY

Photographs? Not now.

FRANKLIN

Pictures. Of you when you used to sing at church. Look at Miss Essie with that wild hat. She would wave her hands and cut the rug like the devil gone wild when you'd sing.

VINCY

That was country stuff Dad.

FRANKLIN

Look at your Mom's face in this one. Caroline was so proud. Swore that those skinny legs of yours would make me proud some day.

VINCY

It's embarrassing.

FRANKLIN

But it's the voice that's got it. Inside the church or in the house, you was always crooning. Like tonight. You had them drooling! Drinking and drooling just watching you.

VINCY

(standing) That's disgusting! Sleazy boozers. I wanna go get changed.

FRANKLIN

Vincy...It's not bad. I'm tryin' to tell ya that you're...

VINCY

Stop it Dad! That's enough. If you think I'm not gonna stay here and sing forever you got it wrong. I plan on doing something real. Something that means something. Someday I'm gonna sing in a place where real people, important people will come to listen to me.

FRANKLIN

Important people! I'm not important!? People you live with and work with every day aren't important. I wipe counters and pick up garbage every day around here so that you can tell me I ain't worth nothin? What has gotten into your head. We have a great night tonight and you're gonna come in here talkin' all kind of shit! You see this Dee Dee. This girl has lost her mind.

VINCY

Dad you're not listening. I'm tryin' to tell you that there are other things out there for me...for you!

FRANKLIN

Young lady, you need to march your ass back to the apartment and wipe that nonsense out of your head. You're not going anywhere. We had a great night! I work my ass off trying to keep a roof over your head and you say things to me that my worst enemy wouldn't...get out of here before I slap the...(he stops himself). Just go.....

(VINCY rises with tears in her eyes.)

VINCY

I just want to...

FRANKLIN

Go.....

(VINCY flees the club)

ACT I, Scene 15
Simultaneous. Inside the club, On the stoop, Down by the River.

#13 DISTANT VOICES

FRANKLIN

SHE'S GOT SOME NERVE
TO LEAVE ME NOW
TO SASS ME NOW
LIKE WE'RE NOT GOOD ENOUGH FOR HER

DUKE-DEE DEE-WILLIE

YOU PUT HER UP THERE SINGING
WHAT DO YOU EXPECT

FRANKLIN

AFTER A NIGHT LIKE THIS
I DON'T DESERVE THIS
CAN'T SHE SEE IT'S OUR UPTOWN SOUND
WHO DOES SHE THINK SHE IS, I'M A HER FATHER

DUKE-DEE DEE-WILLIE

SLEEP ON IT.
SHE'S JUST SHOWING YOU SOME SASS.

(The band leaves. FRANKLIN is alone in the club.)

FRANKLIN

HOW COULD SHE DO THIS TO ME
I'M DOING THE BEST I CAN WITHOUT HER MOTHER
THAT WOMAN NEVER ACTED LIKE THIS
NOW SHE TREATS ME LIKE THIS AND I'M HER FATHER

ALL THESE YEARS I'M TAKING CARE OF HER
AND I NEVER SAW HER ACT LIKE THIS
AND I'M HER FATHER

(It's 3:00 am. VINCY has gone out to the streets and is sitting on the stoop. Angry blues vocalizations spill from her mouth)

VINCY

OH-OOOO-OOH-OOOO-OO-OH
OH-OOOO-OOH-OOOO-OO-OH
WHO DOES HE THINK HE IS
HE CAN'T TELL ME WHAT TO DO

(DOC is alone standing down by the river watching the lights of the city.)

SO LATE.
NEVER BEEN OUT
THIS LATE
BEFORE

I'M LISTENING
FOR A CHANGE

NEVER BEEN OUT

I'M GROWN.
CAN'T SIT DOWN

THIS LATE
BEFORE
PINPOINTS OF
CITY LIGHT
A DISTANT VOICE
FLOATING
ON A BREEZE

THAT GUY

MOON'S ON THE
VERGE OF
FALLING

I'M HER FATHER

MUSIC OF LOVE

MY HEART SIGHS
A SONG WITH NO
WORDS

THAT DOC

I'M GROWN
CAN'T SIT DOWN

LOVE IS THE
MUSIC

THAT GIRL

THAT GUY

HOW COULD SHE
DO THIS TO ME

DISTANT VOICES FLOATING ON A BREEZE

DISTANT VOICES FLOATING ON A BREEZE

DISTANT VOICES FLOATING ON A BREEZE

DISTANT VOICES FLOATING ON A BREEZE

Act I, Scene 16
Near the river

(VINCY enters an isolated place on the stage where DOC sits imagining riffs in his head. VIINCY sees him.)

VINCY

Doc! What're you doing here. It's late.

DOC

Vincy. You found me.

(DOC approaches VINCY and she backs away.)

I'm just out thinkin'. Using my noggin as my Mom would say.

VINCY

I'm walking. Didn't think I'd see anyone.

DOC

It's late. Gotta be careful. Ya never know what kind of goof might try to mess with you.

VINCY

I'll be fine. It's almost morning now Doc. Your Mom'll be crazy wondering where you are.

DOC

She can wait.

(He turns his attention to VINCY.)

You look beautiful.

VINCY

All I did was get dressed.

DOC

That's enough. You came and found me.

VINCY

Dad's pissed at me.

DOC

Franklin?

VINCY

Yeah Dad. Showing me photographs from my country-assed past.

DOC

That's great Vincy.

VINCY

You don't understand. I've gotta break free, be on my own. Imagine...

#14 IF HE'D ONLY LET ME GO

VINCY

I COULD SING IN PARIS
NEAR THE EIFFEL TOWER
IF HE'D ONLY LET ME GO

DOC

IF HE'D ONLY LET YOU GO

VINCY

MOVE MY SOUNDS MUCH HIGHER
LIKE A MOVIE STAR
IF HE'D ONLY LET ME GO

DOC

IF HE'D ONLY LET YOU GO

VINCY

I COULD SING LIKE LENA
DOWN AT CARNEGIE HALL
RIDE A COOL BLACK LIMO
PAST THE CANDY STORE
BUT I NEED SOMEBODY THERE TO PLAY FOR ME

Doc would you go with me?

WE COULD LIVE LIKE ROYALS
MAKING SOUNDS RUN FREE
PLAY THE PARIS OPERA
WITH YOU AT MY SIDE

DOC

WITH ME AT YOUR SIDE?

VINCY

PLAYING NOTES LIKE ANGELS
EVERYDAY ANYDAY
WITH OUR FACES ON THE COVER OF A MAGAZINE
WE COULD PLAY IN PARIS
ON THE CHAMPS ELYSEE
WITH YOU AT MY SIDE

DOC

WITH ME AT YOUR SIDE

VINCY and DOC

TOGETHER FOREVER
WITH YOU AT MY SIDE

DOC

No doubt about it. We'll be a great...

VINCY

Team!

(Blackout)

ACT 1, Scene 17
Mom's Variety Store

(TICO enters the store.)

TICO

Morning Mam. How's business? (TICO eyes the store.)

MOM

Can I help you?

TICO

Looks like a respectable establishment.

MOM

It's been my life for a dozen years. Can I help you?

TICO

I'm looking for a crowbar. Mmmm... Babe Ruths.

(TICO opens a candy bar and bites into it.)

MOM

Those are for sale!

TICO

(Ignoring her) Saw your son...Melvin's his name, right?

MOM

Doc...

TICO

At that joint next door.

MOM

My son. He's a wonderful ...

TICO

Sitting right up there with the coloreds...

MOM
musician

TICO
playin' music

(pause)

MOM

With the coloreds?

TICO

So why you let him run around with a crowd like that? If he's a musician, he should play real music.

MOM

He just won't listen.

TICO

Yes mam. They're all like that till ya put on the pressure.

MOM

I don't know what to do.

TICO

Uh huh. I know what ya mean.

MOM

I just can't raise him right.

TICO

They just go down the wrong path.

MOM

He's out of control!

#15 POSSIBILITIES

MOM

I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH HIM
HE NEVER LISTENS
HIS FATHER'S LEFT ME WITH A PROBLEM I CAN'T HANDLE

TICO

TERRIBLE THING

MOM
HE'S SITTING ON THE STOOP AGAIN
HE'S LIKE A VAGRANT
A YOUNG MAN WITH A PASSION WHO HAS GOT NO SENSE

TICO
HE'S QUITE A BOY

MOM
HE CHASES GIRLS AND LEAVES THE HOUSE
HE'S WALKS THE STREETS AT NIGHT
IF I CAN'T HOLD HIM THEN I'M GONNA LOSE MY MIND

TICO/MOM
DO SOMETHING

MOM
GET HIM OUTTA HERE
WHO KNOWS WHAT WILL HAPPEN
I JUST CAN'T DO IT ON MY OWN

TICO
THERE ARE POSSIBILITIES

TICO/MOM
DO SOMETHING

TICO
THERE ARE POSSIBILITIES

TICO/MOM
DO SOMETHING

TICO
POSSIBILITIES

(MOM breaks down and starts to cry. TICO consoles her.)

TICO
Pull yourself together Miss Mom. Look. I got some connections downtown. Maybe we can help out. They even got a club where they play good music, European music.

MOM

Doc needs someone.

TICO

You like Verdi? We play Verdi downtown.

MOM

I love Verdi.

TICO

I'll take care of this for ya. I'm sure there's a place in my organization for your son. Let me handle this.

~~MOM~~

~~Could you? He's almost a hopeless case. Always out in the streets, keeping bad company.~~

~~TICO~~

~~I know exactly what you mean. Believe me, I gotta place for him. No problem.~~

~~(Lights fade to black.)~~

ACT I, Scene 18
Late afternoon at the Le Hot Blu.

~~(In the darkness the sounds of the band wood shedding a bebop tune. It's late afternoon. Lights up on the band – PREZ, DEE DEE, WILLIE, DUKE. FRANKLIN sits at the bar.)~~

~~WILLIE~~

~~Cut out the intro. Let's start it right from the top.~~

~~FRANKLIN~~

~~What are you gonna do about the bridge?~~

(POLICEMAN O'REILLY enters the club.)

O'REILLY

OK. Shut it down.

FRANKLIN

Casey O Reilly.

(O'REILLY acknowledges the greeting with a head nod and then turns away.)

O'REILLY
Mr. Franklin Gilboa you're under arrest. Warrants says faulty wiring, vermin, illegal licenses. Consider yourself closed/out of business.

FRANKLIN
Casey what are you saying?

O'REILLY
I've got my orders and you need to clear out. Now!

DUKE
Who's orders

WILLIE
What orders?

O'REILLY
Just start moving.

FRANKLIN
Years of friendship and now...

(O'REILLY handcuffs FRANKLIN who resists.)

~~DEE DEE~~
~~Easy Franklin. We don't need more trouble than we already have.~~

(FRANKLIN eyes him and then succumbs to the arrest.)

FRANKLIN
This'll be a short trip. Duke, call our lawyer. Find Vincy. Arrange bail. I'm not gonna let this take me down.

O'REILLY
The rest of you be outta here in one hour.

(O'REILLY escorts FRANKLIN to the door as the BAND gathers around him. TICO rounds the corner and confronts FRANKLIN and O REILLY.)

TICO
Havin' a little trouble round here I see. It's the type of establishment the niggers got. Nothin' close to respectable. (to O Reilly, indicating Franklin.) Give me a minute will ya.

(TICO and the handcuffed FRANKLIN step out into the street.)

TICO

Got a little somethin' to share with ya. Seems there's been a defection of someone close to you.

(TICO produces the contract with Vincy's signature. FRANKLIN reacts.)

Ya can't keep a girl like that running with your type of clientele. She and I got ideas for some better things in life.

(FRANKLIN tries to knock TICO down and stumbles sideways. O REILLY appears.)

O'REILLY

Hey ...hey ...hey. Don't make me call for back up!

TICO

Get him outta here!

#16 IT AIN'T RIGHT

FRANKLIN

IT AIN'T RIGHT- THE WAY THEY KILL US ALL THE TIME
IT AIN'T RIGHT – HOW KILLING AIN'T NO CRIME
IT'S LIKE YOU KILL A FLY, A ROACH, A PEST.

TICO

YOU'RE A FOOL OLD MAN - YOU'VE FAILED THE ACID TEST

FRANKLIN

PUT YOUR MIND AT REST. THERE'S ENOUGH OF US TO SPARE.
IT AIN'T FAIR. IT AIN'T FAIR. IT AIN'T FAIR IT AIN'T RIGHT.

IT AIN'T RIGHT THE WAY THEY'RE PUSHING HORSE AND COKE
IT AIN'T RIGHT- LIKE KILLING PEOPLE'S A JOKE

TICO

IT'S LIKE YOU RID YOURSELF OF LICE AND SCUM

FRANKLIN

BUT DO NOT FRET – THERE'S MORE WHERE WE COME FROM
SHUT UP! PLAY DUMB. THERE'S ENOUGH OF US TO SPARE.
IT AIN'T FAIR. IT AIN'T FAIR. IT AIN'T FAIR IT AIN'T RIGHT.

THEY LYNCH US IN THE SOUTH – FOR OPENING OUR MOUTH
THEY CASTRATE US AND BURN US.
THEY MUTILATE AND MAIM US
FOR SIGNING UP TO VOTE. FOR WORKING TO BE FREE.
THEY THROW US ON THE FIRE. A HUMAN FRICASSEE.
IT AIN'T RIGHT. THE WAY OUR STREETS ARE RED WITH BLOOD
IT AIN'T RIGHT. BLACK BODIES LYIN' IN MUD.
IT'S LIKE YOU COME UP TOWN. PULL THE TRIGGER.
KILL AT WILL FOR A JIGGER OF SWILL

TICO
JUST ANOTHER NIGHT. SHOOTIN' FOR A BUCK
NO ONE GIVES A FUCK

FRANKLIN
IT AIN'T FAIR. IT AIN'T FAIR. IT AIN'T FAIR IT AIN'T RIGHT.

TICO **FRANKLIN**

YOU'RE A WHORE OLD BOY I'M A MAN BY DAMN

FRANKLIN
THERE'S MORE WHERE WE CAME FROM.

(OREILLY leads FRANKLIN away THE BAND stands in the doorway while TICO gloats. As they exit DOC and VINCY come up the street and see FRANKLIN being led away.)

VINCY
Dad!

(VINCY takes in the scene)

What's going on?

(Blackout)

ACT II

ACT II, Scene 1
Simultaneous Scenes

 # 17 SOMETIMES IT BE THAT WAY

(Lights up. The scenes within the following song are simultaneous. PREZ stands in the shadows of a lonely rooftop. SPIRIT hovers over him. PREZ is drugged with heroin and weaves back and forth while trying to bring his saxophone to his lips. MOM is angrily sweeping inside of the Variety Store.)

SPIRIT
I HEAR EVERYONE YELLIN " THE BLUES AIN'T FOR ME"
NOW YOU'RE SHOOTIN ON A ROOFTOP WITH NO ONE TO SEE

ENSEMBLE
YOU GOT THE BLUES AND
SOMETIMES YOU HAVE 'EM EVERY DAY
THERE AIN'T NOT DOUBT ABOUT IT
SOMETIMES IT BE THAT WAY**.**

(DEE DEE, on the street, is shining his taxicab while SAN JUAN JOE "hangs" with him.)

DEE DEE
I HEAR EVERYONE YELLIN' " THE BLUES AIN'T FOR ME"
BUT IF YOU'RE DRIVIN' A TAXI AND YOU GOT A PhD

ENSEMBLE
YOU GOT THE BLUES AND
SOMETIMES YOU HAVE 'EM EVERY DAY
THERE AIN'T NOT DOUBT ABOUT IT
SOMETIMES IT BE THAT WAY.

SAN JUAN JOE
LA SENORITA DICE, QUE YA NADA MAS
ELLA VAYA CON LA OTRA QUE SE LLAMAN TOMÁS

ENSEMBLE
YOU GOT THE BLUES AND
SOMETIMES YOU HAVE 'EM EVERY DAY
THERE AIN'T NOT DOUBT ABOUT IT

SOMETIMES IT BE THAT WAY**.**

(EDDIE sits in a wheelchair with KATHERINE at his side. She is comforting him as he struggles to eat a meal.)

KATHERINE
YOU'RE THIRTY TWO AND HOLDING
THINGS ARE GOING FROM BAD TO WORSE

EDDIE
YOU BETTER HUG IT WHILE YOU CAN
IT'S NOT LIKE I HAVE GOT A CURSE

KATHERINE AND EDDIE
YOU GOT THE BLUES AND
SOMETIMES YOU HAVE 'EM EVERY DAY
THERE AIN'T NOT DOUBT ABOUT IT
SOMETIMES IT BE THAT WAY.

ENSEMBLE
SOMETIMES IT BE THAT WAY.
SOMETIMES IT BE THAT WAY.
SOMETIMES IT BE THAT WAY.
SOMETIMES IT BE THAT WAY.
SOMETIMES IT BE THAT WAY.

(The blues song transitions into...)

~~**ACT II, Scene 2**~~
~~**In the Club**~~

~~(Inside of Le Hot Blu. The BAND and the BOPPETTES are completing their packing and locking things down.)~~

~~DUKE~~
~~We gotta take the booze with us or someone'll steal it.~~

~~WILLIE~~
~~Where we gonna store it.~~

~~DEE DEE~~
~~I can hold the cases in my cab till tomorrow.~~

~~VINCY~~
~~Will he be out by then?~~

~~KATHERINE~~

~~Guarantee it. They'll just make him pay up.~~

~~VINCY~~

~~He ain't got no money. Since they robbed Eddie we ain't even paid the rent.~~

~~PREZ~~

~~Well I ain't got it.~~

~~WILLIE~~

~~Don't look over here.~~

~~LORNA~~

~~Where'd them charges come from anyway.~~

~~DEE DEE~~

~~You know good and well where. The mob's in the shadows. Franklin won't hand over the club so they had it closed down.~~

~~DUKE~~

~~Bribes.~~

~~LORNA~~

~~Violence. You seen what they done to Eddie.~~

~~DEE DEE~~

~~No club, no money. We gotta get the music back up.~~

~~DOC~~

~~Yeah, well first we gotta get the door's open.~~

~~KATHERINE~~

~~Go on downtown Duke. See if you can get a temporary permit. And get Franklin out of there quick.~~

#18 PEBBLES IN A STREAM INSTRUMENTAL

(The BAND finishes packing the last of their things. They exit the club in small groups – VINCY first, running to the upstairs apartment, DUKE and DEE DEE talking with animation and followed by WILLIE with the cases, then EDDIE, KATHERINE, and LORNA last. SAN JUAN watches as they exit. DOC is the last to leave. He hangs a sign on the front door that says "Closed.")

ACT II, Scene 3
The Living Room of Franklin's apartment

(As DOC steps Le Hot Blu, he looks up towards VINCY's shadow in the window of the apartment above. As if drawn by a magnet, he climbs the stairs and knocks on the door. VINCY answers. Inside there is a piano and fold out bed with a colorful bedspread.)

DOC

Are you OK?

VINCY

Tired. I guess it'll be all right. Duke's going downtown.

DOC

He'll take care of things.

VINCY

I hope they won't hurt Dad.

DOC

Dukes good at that kinda thing. He'll be back before morning.

(VINCY is silent.)

Hey! Why don't you sing.

VINCY

I don't feel like it.

(DOC moves to the piano.)

Cmon. Give me something

(DOC plays her cue note and Vincy doesn't respond.)

VINCY

Sing???? I need words.

DOC

Words or music? Which comes first?

(DOC plays the intro.)

VINCY

Dad....

(VINCY moves towards the piano.)

VINCY

LIFE IS ON THE ROCKS

DOC
(plays and sings)

LIFE IS ON THE ROCKS

(DOC abruptly stops playing.)

DOC

That's not cool. What happened to the Champs Elysee? Let's practice for Paris. For the day we'll sing together in the kinda club you wanna sing in.

VINCY

Champs Elysee? Did I say it would be blues?

DOC

No way.

(DOC noodles for a moment on the keys)

DOC

How about...

TIME IS JUST A MOMENT

VINCY

TIME IS JUST A MOMENT

(DOC and VINCY hold each other's eyes for a moment.)

Not a love song.

DOC

Naah. Just a song about you and me.

PEBBLES IN A STREAM

DOC

I FIND YOU IN MY DREAMS
LIKE RIPPLES IN A STREAM
HOLDING FOR A CHANCE TO CATCH A DREAM
HANGING ON A BREEZE

VINCY
GUESS I'M IN A MOOD IT SEEMS
I'M JUST SAD AND BLUE

DOC
I'LL BE THERE , FOR YOU SURE WILL

VINCY
FRANKLY DO WHAT YOU MUST DO

DOC
SO THEN FLY INTO MY ARMS AND HOLD ME HARD AND STRONG

VINCY
WILL LOVE FIND IT'S WAY BACK TO ME?

(VINCY moves away from DOC. He resumes playing.)

DOC
A FEATHER IN A STORM
FLIES BY LIKE A DREAM
WILL THE SUN COME OUT FOR ME?
LOVE AIN'T WHAT IT SEEMS. YEAH…

SOARING TRUMPETS SING IN THE AIR

VINCY
YOU CAN PLAY MY DREAMS

DOC
I PLAY THIS GAME FAIR

VINCY
I'M NOT HERE PLAYIN' ANY GAMES.

DOC
PULSING MISTY NOTES UP FOR YOUR SOUL.

VINCY
I'VE BEEN DOWN ON MY LUCK

DOC
I'VE DONE WHAT I'VE DONE
I'VE NEVER LIED. I'LL BE HERE BY YOUR SIDE.

VINCY
IF WHAT YOU SAY IS REALLY TRUE

DOC
I NEED YOU VINCY

VNICY
YOU KNOW WHAT YOU MUST DO.

DOC
TELL ME TELL ME TELL ME TELL ME.

VINCY
JUST HOLD ME AND BE THERE FOR ME
TIL THE SUN COME SHINING THROUGH

SO JUST LET ME GO
AND YOUR HEART WILL KNOW
YOU'LL ALWAYS BE A PART OF MY DREAMS.

DOC
A PEBBLE IN A STREAM SO CLEAR

VINCY
SO CLEAR SO CLEAR

DOC
RIPPLES IN A DREAM

VINCY
OOOOO OWOOOO

DOC
THEN IT DISSAPEARS

VINCY
OOO….ETC.

DOC
LOVE AIN'T WHAT IT SEEMS
LOVIN' YOU TOMORROW

VINCY
IS WHAT I NEED TODAY

DOC
I CAN SEE THE FUTURE WITH YOU

VINCY
DO YOU SEE BEYOND TODAY

DOC
I CAN FEEL THE SOFTNESS OF YOUR SKIN

VINCY
WE SHOULD STOP BEFORE WE BEGIN

DOC
OOW I CAN SEE THE TWO OF US
DANCING THROUGH ALL THE YEARS

VINCY
TIME WILL SLEEP AWAY
LIKE A QUIET DAY

DOC & VINCY
BEFORE WE GET THE CHANCE.

DOC
BUT I SAW YOU IN MY SWEETEST DREAMS

VINCY
YEAH YOU FOUND ME

DOC
LIKE A PEBBLE IN A STREAM

VINCY
LIKE A PEBBLE IN A STREAM

DOC
I REACHED TO TOUCH YOUR LIPS AND THEN I'M GONE
LIKE PEBBLES IN A STREAM

DOC & VINCY
LOVE AIN'T WHAT IT SEEMS
LOVE…..

(Sound of footsteps. FRANKLIN wearily crosses the stage to the entrance of the apartment building.)

FRANKLIN

Vincy! Vincy I'm home.

(VINCY moves away from DOC and towards the door.)

VINCY

Dad's back!

DOC

I love you Vincy.

(VINCY and DOC lock eyes. Blackout)

MUSIC OUT

~~**ACT II, Scene 4**~~
~~**Mom's Variety Store and the stoop out side**~~

~~(MOM is in front of the counter using a mirror, putting on makeup. She tries to cover the bags underneath her too tired eyes. SPIRIT enters.)~~

~~SPIRIT~~

~~Morning Ms. Henschel.~~

~~(Caught, she puts things away.)~~

~~MOM~~

~~Who's there?~~

~~SPIRIT~~

~~A voice from next door.~~

~~MOM~~

~~Who? Well whoever you are you got some nerve comin' in here after last night. My son Doc was out till all hours. Were you with him?~~

~~SPIRIT~~

~~Course I was. There was some hard hitting sounds in the club.~~

~~MOM~~

~~You outta be ashamed. Doc comes home smellin' like smoke and boose. Throwing his life up at me like I don't count for anything.~~

SPIRIT

He's a man. Wild and free.

MOM

He's my son.

SPIRIT

And he's grown. I reckon you should be living your own life. (indicating the makeup) See you got your face on.

MOM

I was putting it away.

SPIRIT

Looks good too. Lots a color. Kinda hinkty.

MOM

Hinkty?

SPIRIT

Fashionable. Look's like you're ready to put on your Sunday-go-to-meeting clothes.

MOM

I'm Jewish, and I'm talking about my son.

SPIRIT

And I'm talking about you. How long you gonna moan and groan about Doc and his life? Instead of bad mouthing him ya outta be celebrating yourself.

MOM

I can't do that.

SPIRIT

Why not? You're a biddie who can still turn someone's eye.

(The lights cross fade to the stoop. FRANKLIN, DUKE, DEE DEE, WILLIE, KATHERINE, and LORNA are gathered in a heated conversation. As FRANKLIN speaks the group quiets down.)

FRANKLIN

Everyone here? Good! So what went down?

~~DEE DEE~~

~~There's more bad news Franklin.~~

~~FRANKLIN~~

~~Shit comes in large doses.~~

~~DEE DEE~~

~~They picked up Prez last night. Found him passed out and put him in the slammer.~~

~~KATHERINE~~

~~Lorna's down there now getting him placed in treatment.~~

~~FRANKLIN~~

~~Who told you?~~

~~DUKE~~

~~San Juan. Who else?~~

~~WILLIE~~

~~First he sends them to the grave, then he wants to play the angel.~~

~~DUKE~~

~~We got bigger problems than that. If we can't pay the fines by Monday, they'll shut us down for good.~~

~~WILLIE~~

~~There's other clubs. Minton's is poppin.~~

~~DEE DEE~~

~~Ain't no club like Le Hot.~~

~~FRANKLIN~~

~~And ain't no problem bigger than taking care of our own. I'm ready to kick some ass.~~

~~(Lights cross fade back to the Variety Store)~~

~~MOM~~

~~Did you want to buy something?~~

~~SPIRIT~~

~~Actually no. I'm here on behalf of the Block Association. We need some help with banners.~~

~~MOM~~

~~Some nerve. I don't have time for that kind of a thing. I've got a business to run.~~

SPIRIT

This is part of the business. One hand washes the other. You've got a sewing machine don't cha. It'll take about 15 minutes to sew a couple of seams.

(MOM opens the door inviting SPIRIT to leave.)

SPIRIT

I'm not goin' anywhere. All I need is a little neighborly effort to keep things friendly around here.

MOM

So who's going to help me out?

(SPIRIT rises and closes the door, staying inside. The lights cross fade back to the stoop.)

KATHERINE

So if the cub closes how are we gonna get paid? Lord knows I ain't got no money. Eddie's doctor bill is still waiting and I just signed on for extra cleaning duty on a Sunday shift.

DUKE

Lorna was talking about some idea she had.

WILLIE

What! A church social?

DUKE

Naw. More like a rent party…

KATHERINE

You talkin' about her crazy idea about a dance free-for-all?

DUKE

… a rent party with music.

DEE DEE

You need a place to have a rent party

KATHERINE

Duke, did you check on that 24 hour license? If we had a license we could have us a party.

FRANKLIN

And some party it'd be.

~~DUKE~~

~~I can't get a permit, but I know someone who can. Dee Dee, give me a ride.~~

~~(Lights cross fade back to Mom's Variety store. Mom is now more relaxed.)~~

~~SPIRIT~~

~~How long you been knowing Franklin?~~

~~MOM~~

~~Years.~~

~~SPIRIT~~

~~Did he ever help you out?~~

~~MOM~~

~~Sure. He and Max used to....~~

~~SPIRIT~~

~~Well like I say, one hand washes the other. Today he's in trouble and he needs some support. We got a plan for a party...a fundraiser.~~

~~MOM~~

~~Raising funds for what?~~

~~SPIRIT~~

~~Open up the club. Freshen things up a bit. They're working ovah there now. The party's tonight...late....and you're invited.~~

~~MOM~~

~~You know I can't be...~~

~~(MOM shakes her head.)~~

~~For you, the admission is free.~~

~~(SPIRIT looks MOM in the eye.)~~

~~Look you already got your makeup on and this'll be a good way to start getting folks together. Clean up the block. Maybe plant a garden or something.~~

~~MOM~~

~~And Doc?~~

~~SPIRIT~~

~~Oh...he'll be there. Don't you worry.~~

(MOM sighs)

SPIRIT

Here's the fabric. We'll need it by 7:00 tonight.

(Blackout)

ACT II, Scene 5
In the Alleyway

(SAN JUAN JOE stands smoking a joint in the alleyway. FRANKLIN enters and shoves him.)

FRANKLIN

Get rid a that shit.

(SAN JUAN falls to the ground and then recovers to his feet.)

Stinking up my neighborhood like you ain't got our own turf on the other side of town

SAN JUAN

Yo ... yo.... yo.... calmate... hey.

(Backing away.)

Hijo de puta ! Es mi barrio too. You crazy man.

FRANKLIN

Prez's gone down cause you been snuggling up with Dego slime.

SAN JUAN

One hand washes the other. What've you done to help me out?

FRANKLIN

Paid with my blood and sweat to keep the block clean while you been anklin' around sellin' poison and jivin'.

(FRANKLIN slugs him.)

This one's for Prez. Find another occupation or I'll send ya a love letter you'll never forget.

~~(FRANKLIN rolls up his sleeves daring SAN JUAN to make a move, and then storms out leaving SAN JUAN stunned and silent. Fade to black.)~~

ACT II, Scene 6
Outside Miss Suzie's dance studio

(TICO is instructing O'REILLY about how to hang a sign.)

TICO
To the right Mick. That's right. Line it up.

O'REILLY
Watch your mouth. The sign keeps moving like it's got its own mind.

TICO
I ain't got all day.

(O'REILLY hits the last nail and steps down.)

O'REILLY
Finished.

TICO
My money horse is ready.

#19 THE RAINBEAU PALACE

TICO
WHEN THIS CLUB OF MINE IS REBORN
EMPTIED OF OLD CHAIRS AND TABLES TOO WORN
WITH ITS WINDOWS BROKEN AND SHADES ALL TORN
MY OWN GOLDMINE. EACH MAN'S CONCUBINE

PICTURE THIS PLEASURE HOUSE
TEEMING WITH SWELLS
THE GENTS IT WOULD STROKE
AS THEY REVEL IN HELL
NEON LIGHTS, A GLEAMING BAR
FASHIONED IN OAK.

O'REILLY
WHERE WE STASH THE KILOS OF POT
WHERE WE STORE THE COKE.

TICO.
THE RAINBEAU PALACE
OFFERING EACH MANS ALICE

O'REILLY

JEANINE AS THE QUEEN

TICO
DOLLS OF EACH SHADE AND SHEEN.
A HAVEN FOR THE CRAVIN' THEY'VE BEEN SAVIN.
IT'S ALL MINE NOW

CASH WILL LINE MY POCKETS
WE CHARGE FOR EVERY LAY
SO THEY SHELL OUT WHAT I GIVE EM
AS I SNATCH EVERY MAN'S PAY

O'REILLY
THIS BORDELLO FOR EVERY FELLOW
LUSCIOUS LADIES ON DISPLAY.

TICO
HIGH HEEL SHOES AND BIG ROUND BOOBS,
BOUNCING AS THEY SWAY.

O'REILLY
FLOPPING OUT OF OPEN ROBES
FLASHING PUBES EVERYWHERE

TICO
THE STREET I WILL HAVE WON
WHEN THE CLUB'S IN MY CARE

THERE'S ONE THING I AM SURE WE CAN TRUST.

O'REILLY
THE NEVER ENDING TIDE OF HUMAN LUST.

BOTH
THE RAINBEAU PALACE
OFFERING EACH MANS ALICE

O'REILLY
JEANINE AS THE QUEEN

TICO
DOLLS OF EACH SHADE AND SHEEN.
A HAVEN FOR THE CRAVIN' THEY'VE BEEN SAVIN.
IT'S ALL MINE NOW
IT'S ALL MINE NOW
IT'S ALL MINE NOW
ALL MINE

TICO
So let's get inside and set it all up.

(TICO and O'REILLY move their gear into Miss Suzie's studio.)

MUSIC OUT

ACT II, Scene 7
The Street

(Lights up. KATHERINE enters the street from inside of Le Hot Blu carrying a cleaning rag and a bucket of water. She begins to wash the windows. EDDIE, feeling better, supports her on a stool. MOM enters the street from the Variety Store carrying a banner. DOC follows her.)

KATHERINE
There. Got it shining like a magic mirror for the soul. I shoulda been paid. (calling inside) Franklin! You outta see this.

(KATHERINE sees MOM and DOC approach.)

Well look who strolled outta the pharmacy.

(MOM arrives at the entrance to Le Hot Blu. She looks better, more dressed up.)

MOM
Thought I'd show you my handiwork.

(MOM and DOC unroll the banner. It says "24 Hours to Pay the Fine.")

Sure glad that Franklin's back.

KATHERINE
Are you stickin' your nose where it's not welcome.

MOM
I don't think so. Help can come from places you least expect it.

~~EDDIE~~
~~Thank's Ms Henschel. It's been a while since I seen ya in this neck 'a the woods.~~

~~MOM~~
Doc convinced me. Glad to help out.

~~DOC~~
~~Eddie! Looks like you're feelin' better. You ain't even got a limp.~~

~~EDDIE~~
~~Comin' along.~~

~~KATHERINE~~
~~(kissing EDDIE) He's whole an' hearty an' by my side.~~

~~(FRANKLIN enters the street from the club and greets the women.)~~

FRANKLIN
Bar's stocked! And it's looking really good out here. (to MOM) Everybody's looking good.

(DOC and KATHERINE hang the sign.)

FRANKLIN
24 Hours to Pay Fines!

(Franklin starts to pace back and forth as people arrive to prepare for the evening music and dance contest.)

#20 TWENTY FOUR HOURS

(WILLIE, LORNA, and VINCY enter.)

FRANKLIN
WE GOT TWENTY FOUR HOURS NOW TWENTY FOUR HOURS

WILIE
SUE ELLEN BETTER BRING HER BRANDIED BREAD PUDDING

LORNA
THEY'RE MAKING 'TATER SALAD OVER AT THE CHURCH

VINCY
AND SOME GREENS

FRANKLIN
WE GOT TWENTY FOUR HOURS NOW TWENTY FOUR HOURS

MOM
ON MY WAY! I'LL FIND YOU SOME PLACE MATS

(MOM exits)

FRANKLIN
WE GOT TWENTY FOUR HOURS NOW TWENTY FOUR HOURS
DEE'S BRINGIN IN SOME FIERCE HORN PLAYERS

VINCY
TWENTY TWO HOURS DAD!

WILLIE
WHAT ABOUT THE PEOPLE, WHERE THEY COMING FROM?

FRANKLIN
IN TWENTY FOUR HOURS, (to VINCY) LESS THAN THAT

WILLIE
WHERE THEY COMING FROM?

LORNA
BROOKLYN

VINCY
BRONX

KATHERINE
QUEENS

(DUKE and DEE DEE enter.)

DUKE
MANHATTAN

DEE DEE
ON THEIR WAY

FRANKLIN
DO THEY KNOW THEY HAVE TO PAY TO GET IN?

WILLIE
THEY BETTER PAY.

DUKE
SAN JUAN JOE IS OUT CRUISIN MAMBO DANCERS

LORNA
BOOTY SHAKING

WILLIE
WHAT'LL WE DO WITH ALL THOSE PR'S UP IN HERE?

FRANKLIN
PHONE CALLS,
TICKETS
WHO'S ON THE DOOR?

KATHERINE
TWENTY FOUR HOURS.
THE BOYS ARE REALLY SUITING UP TONIGHT

LORNA
VELVET COLLARS

DUKE
IF PREZ WAS HERE WE'D SEE A FINE BERET

(Now FRANKIN starts to direct people to their places in the club.)

FRANKLIN
ON THE DOOR
MAN THE BOX
STOCK THE BAR
HIT THE FLOOR

ENSEMBLE
TWENTY FOUR
TWENTY FOUR
TWENTY FOUR
TWENTY FOUR

TWENTY FOUR HOURS!

ACT II, Scene 8
The Club Le Hot Blu

#21 RENT PARTY SUITE OPENING

(The setting transforms to reveal the club in the full swing of the party. At times, the musicians play full out while the audience watches. At other times the entire crowd dances together. Later, there are "break out" moments where couples and solos take the floor.)

#21A RENT PARTY 1st MOVEMENT (SLOW BLUES)

(KATHERINE dances a slow and sultry blues while WILLIE plays and improvises for her on the piano. When KATHERINE really begins to sweat, EDDIE plays for her on his blues harp until both of them sink down in exhaustion.)

#21B RENT PARTY 2ND MOVEMENT (BEBOP)

(WILLIE and DEE DEE plays an up tempo bebop as two couples compete in a jitterbug sequence in which the bodies bounce of one another before they move into lifts and spins that move the dancers across the floor. A PHOTOGRAPHER and a REPORTER enter the club and set up their camera in a corner.)

#21C RENT PARTY 3rd MOVEMENT (LATIN MAMBO)

(A conga drum solo begins and one woman starts a Caribbean dance in the style of Katherine Dunham. The drums evolve into a hot mambo dance number in which the dancer shimmies and flirts with all who are in the club. SAN JUAN enters, responds to the music and wants to dance. FRANKLIN tries to pull him away, but he insists. SAN JUAN approaches LORNA who enthusiastically dances with him using hip rolls and shimmies that shock everyone. At the end of the dance, he hands her a packet.)

#21D RENT PARTY 4th MOVEMENT (STRIDE)

(A slow stride number has the dancers moving in parallel lines across the floor. Each pair shows off with music and/or dance. DOC is the last to perform with DEE DEE BOO, DUKE, and EDDIE as his back-up band. After DOC performs a brilliant piano solo, FRANKLIN jumps onstage.)

FRANKLIN

Thank you all for showing up. The donations begin now…

(The crowd gathers around FRANKLIN and begins putting money in the basket.)

ACT II, Scene 9
Late night near the Dressing Room Door.

DOC

So many people! I'm sure we made enough money.

VINCY

The dancing was great.

DOC

I never seen ankles and backsides and legs fly like that.

VINCY

I didn't get to sing my song, and no one said anything about my dress.

DOC

It fits every curve like glove.

VINCY

That's not what I meant.

(DOC tries to touch her and she brushes him off.)

Doc, let's go away tomorrow. I want to get out of this block and this place. Let's go today, now. It's almost light.

DOC

Where we gonna go Vincy? What about the club...Le Hot...your Dad.

VINCY

Paris! Downtown. I don't know. Dad'll be fine. He's got enough cash to pay the fines now. He doesn't need me!

(She brings DOC close to her and sits.)

Doc, there's a chance I can sign on to a really big deal. This scout heard me sing and said I'm perfect. I can start this weekend, but I need you to play for me.

DOC

Coo-oo-oo l. I'll play for you fifty-eleven times if you ask me to. So what is it? Is it with a label? My feelers are ready. Where do we sign?

VINCY

Well I'm supposed to find the guy this morning, right around the corner. Tico – Mr. Toscani's gonna meet me at Miss Suzie's. You know, where we useta play. I'm gonna try out my first number just for him.

DOC

A special song? Well I figger we can show him that number we were doing in your place (he pauses to look in her eyes) you remember it..."Pebbles in a Stream."

VINCY

Sure....

DOC

Yeee ahhh. I'll meet you right here tomorrow...today... and walk you ovah there. What time?

VINCY

Early. 10:30. I gotta meet him at 11.

DOC

I'll be there!

(DOC kisses VINCY fervently.)

DOC

I'll be there for <u>you</u>!

(Lights fade to blackout.)

ACT II, Scene 10
Outside Miss Suzie's dance studio, now Tico's Rainbeau Palace

(DOC and VINCY enter the block holding hands and looking at the storefronts.)

VINCY

This is it.

DOC

Looks the same, but the name's different.

VINCY

(reading) "Tico's Rainbeau Palace." When did that change?

(Lights up on TICO who suddenly appears standing on the street.)

TICO

There she is. The singing sensation.

VINCY

Oh! Mr. Toscani. You scared me.

TICO

You found the place.

VINCY

Yeah. And I brought along my pianist – Doc.

TICO

I've heard 'a the boy. They say he's quite a talent. Could be some wonderful opportunities for both of youse... and your artistries.

(TICO takes the time to size them up.)

Tell ya what. How about I try ya out one at a time. Ms. Gilboa, come on inside with me. (Turning to DOC) You stay outside here till you're needed.

DOC

But we play toge....

TICO

Shut up kid.

(TICO escorts VINCY inside the dance studio. DOC stands nervously outside. We see VINCY's shadow through the shades that are drawn across the windows of the studio. She stands and vamps while TICO sits watching her. He

approaches her and touches her. She backs away. He insists. The two shadows move towards a part of the room where they cannot be seen. We hear muffled voices.)

VINCY

Stop it!

TICO

Bitch.

VINCY

Get away from me.

TICO

You want fame, it starts here.

(Sounds of a scuffle. DOC bangs on the door and the window trying to get in. Sounds of banging and falling furniture. DOC kicks at the door.)

VINCY

Let me go!... Doc!

(DOC breaks through the door as VINCY runs outside with TICO trying to hold her back. DOC pushes TICO back inside as VINCY stands near the door. Sounds and shadows of a fight between DOC and TICO begin. VINCY hesitates. The fight escalates. VINCY runs off to find help.)

#22 SAVE HIM INSTRUMENTAL

(VINCY runs though the streets until she arrives at theLe Hot Blu. SPIRIT sees her pass by and soothes VINCY with her voice.)

SPIRIT

A DAY FIGHT IN HARLEM
SOMEONE GETS STABBED
SOMEONE RUNS.

(VINCY bursts into Le Hot Blu trembling with fear.)

ACT II, Scene 11
The Club Le Hot Blu

#22 SAVE HIM

(FRANKLIN, KATHERINE, and LORNA are picking up trash from the party when VINCY explodes into the scene. DUKE, DEE DEE, EDDIE, WILLIE are trying to get functional. There is a moment of silence as the ENSEMBLE notices VINCY's dress and state of disarray. FRANKLIN moves toward her as VINCY explains.)

FRANKLIN
What the fuck happened!

VINCY

I GOT AWAY
HE GRABBED AT ME

GROPED ME
TICO THE SLIME
HE PROMISED ME PAR-REE

HE TOUCHED ME THERE

WHERE NO ONE SHOULD GO
NO ONE CAN GO
THERE
DADDY!
I'VE LOST IT ALL

FRANKLIN

VINCY
MY BABY

DID HE TOUCH YOU?
TICO THE SLIME.

DO YOU HEAR THIS?

WHERE?

I'VE LOST IT ALL

FRANKLIN
Why did you let that bastard come near you?

VINCY

YOU SHOULD HAVE TOLD ME

THE SLIME DOWN THERE

SEEPED THROUGH MY PORES
AND INTO MY GUT.

ABUSED AND USED
MY BODIES LOST

FRANKLIN

YOU NEVER LISTEN

LIKE THE GRIME UP HERE
I'LL KILL HIM THAT SON OF A BITCH
I'LL KILL HIM

WERE YOU ALONE?
TOGETHER ….

YOU TWO ARE….
TROUBLE
THAT KID AT A WHORE HOUSE CLUB

DOCS STILL THERE
HE STOOD UP BESIDE ME.
PUNCHING THROWING
HITTING MISSING.
HE PROTECTED ME

FRANKLIN
That scrawny kid don't know nothing bout protecting nobody. Where'd you leave him?

VINCY
He was on the floor! Crawling and bloody on the floor.

VINCY
YOU'VE GOT TO
SAVE HIM
I LOVE HIM!

FRANKLIN
SAVE HIM
IT'S TOO DANGEROUS

KATHERINE-LORNA
A MANS A MAN

DEE DEE BOO, WILLIE, EDDIE, and DUKE
IT'S TOO DANGEROUS
WE'RE NOT RISKING OUR LIVES

SPIRIT
HE'S ONE OF US

VINCY
YOU'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING

FRANKLIN
MA'S KID – I OWE IT TO HIM

DEE DEE BOO, WILLIE, EDDIE, and DUKE
HE'S A WHITE KID
HE MOVES THE KEYS

FRANKLIN
MA'S KID – I OWE IT TO HIM

VINCY
HE MAY BE DEAD

FRANKLIN
HE MAY BE DEAD

THE MEN	THE WOMEN
CROSS THE LINE	FOR LIFE
TAKE A STAND	FOR THE MUSIC
TAKE A CHANCE	FOR LOVE
IT'S A RISK	FOR THE FRIENDSHIP
IT'S ALL FOR GOOD	FOR THE CLUB

~~EDDIE~~

~~We gotta get him outta there Franklin.~~

~~FRANKLIN~~

~~It ain't gonna be safe.~~

~~DUKE~~

~~You got us for backup.~~

~~DEE DEE~~

~~That bastard's come up on the wrong side a the tracks. You got a shiv?~~

~~FRANKLIN~~

~~More than that.~~

~~DUKE~~

~~Well bring it out.~~

~~EDDIE~~

~~C'mon. Let's bottle up an' go.~~

~~KATHERINE~~

~~Eddie...~~

~~FRANKLIN~~

~~You ladies hold the roost.~~

~~(FRANKLIN, DEE DEE, EDDIE, and DUKE move into the streets.)~~

ACT II, Scene 12
Miss Suzie's dance studio, now Tico's Rainbeau Palace

(Inside the dance studio DOC is beaten up around the face and tied up. TICO rises and slaps DOC'S face.)

TICO

Wake up! We're headin' downtown. I got ya that job I promised your mother.

DOC

I can't go.

TICO

Now! Or I'll break botha your hands. We'll see what kinda tune you play then.

(DOC raises his head as FRANKLIN, DUKE, and DEE DEE break through the studio door. EDDIE stands guard outside.)

FRANKLIN

Dee Dee! Stay by the door.

(TICO turns.)

I got you now you son-of-bitch.

(FRANKLIN and DUKE move toward TICO who pulls a knife.)

FRANKLIN

Shivs, huh! No poppers.

(FRANKLIN pulls his knife out.)

FRANKLIN

Doc! You OK?

(DOC, beat up, doesn't answer)

DUKE

I'll grab the bastard for you, Franklin

FRANKLIN

Forget it Duke. He's mine. Help the kid.

#23 INSTRUMENTAL PERCUSSIVE UNDERSCORE

(DUKE goes toward DOC. TICO lunges at DUKE. DUKE jumps out of the way. FRANKLIN crouches moving his

knife back and forth from hand to hand. TICO does the same and begins to circle. MUSIC punctuates the knife passing from hand to hand. DUKE goes to DOC untying the rope around DOC'S neck and body.)

TICO

You've lost your last battle hero.

(TICO lunges at FRANKLIN and slashes his neck. [MUSIC STOPS] FRANKLIN grabs his wound with one hand and INSTANTLY re-acting, sticks TICO in the thigh and the stomach before TICO can re-group. DEE DEE joins the fight. [MUSIC CONTINUES] TICO resists, fights harder until FRANKLIN and DEE DEE overcome him. TICO finally screams and falls whimpering. [MUSIC ENDS]

~~TICO~~

~~Don't leave me here bleedin' you son of a...~~

~~(DOC is up on his feet being supported by DUKE.)~~

~~DUKE~~

~~C'mon Doc, stay with us.~~

~~DEE DEE~~

~~Franklin, let's move outta here quick. You ok?~~

~~FRANKLIN~~

~~Nothin' that won't get better.~~

~~DEE DEE~~

~~Okay. Put away the knife. Duke...Doc...let's go!~~

~~(The men exit the club leaving TICO on the floor.)~~

ACT II, Scene 13
Simultaneous at the Candy Store and Franklin's Apartment

(DOC is in the Candy Store with MOM. She is wetting rags in water and using them as compresses to sooth the bruises on DOC's head.)

DOC

It was really scary for a moment – knives – thank god I'm alive.

MOM

Bruises everywhere. At least they'll heal. You made it home battered like a beaten dog.

(DOC touches MOM's hand for a minute and looks up a her.)

DOC

Thanks for taking care of me Mom.

MOM

You're my son.

DOC

I love Vincy Mom. She's so beautiful, it hurts your eyes.

MOM

Love. It holds you like a blind reaper. This was your father's house. He worked hard to get this store and our home above it. I always thought to myself ... "this is where we live and work and this is where we stay, we never leave"... until now.

DOC

Mom....I ....

MOM

I know son. You've got to go.

(DOC and MOM look at each other as she draws him close into long and tender hug. The lights cross fade to the upstairs apartment where FRANKLIN and VINCY are sitting on the bed talking.)

VINCY

Dad, I'm sorry for what I did, but I wanted something more.

FRANKLIN

It was a damn stupid move...stupid

VINCY

I was dreamin' Dad. But even though dreams sometimes lead to disappointments, without dreams there's no new life.

FRANKLIN

True. You gotta make a life for yourself.

(FRANKLIN takes VINCY's face with both hand and looks into her eyes.)

It's perfectly clear that the two of you are in love.

VINCY
Oh Daddy. He makes me feel a way that I've never felt before - comfortable, but with butterflies inside.

FRANKLIN
I know about love baby. Your Mom was my heart. I promised Caroline you would be a teacher one day with a degree from college, something to fall back on.

VINCY
I'm a singer Dad. That's what Mom taught me. Singin' is part of my soul.

FRANKLIN
Your Mom is listening from the front row every time you get onstage. You should be with Doc, if you love him. But this neighborhood and its music is important. We need you here Vincy.

VINCY
I don't wanna go too far cause I've known all of you since...well you're all I've ever known.

FRANKLIN
So sing here. You can be a headliner at the club. You've grown and the two of you would make a great pair.

(VINCY moves away from FRANKLIN and smiles.)

VINCY
We already are....

(DOC and VINCY each walk out of their separate scenes and away from their parents as the parents, MOM and FRANKLIN watch them leave. They move towards the audience, each in their separate world, until they finally see on another.)

#24 ENDINGS ARE NEW BEGINNINGS

DOC
WE TRAVEL ROADS WITH NO DESTINATION IN SIGHT.

VINCY
THINKING TO ENCOUNTER A WISH OR A DREAM

DOC
LOVE MOVES US FORWARD

VINCY
EACH STEP A NEW ADVENTURE AS WE

BOTH
BREATHE WITH EACH OTHER
FINDING ENDINGS
IN NEW BEGINNINGS

VINCY
I FEEL YOU GO

DOC
SO BREATHE WITH ME HEAL ME.

VINCY
FEEL ME

BOTH
ENDINGS
ARE NEW BEGINNINGS
I WATCH YOU
BREATHE WITH YOU
BREATHE
AS YOU GO

ACT II, Scene 14
Outside Miss Suzie's dance studio, now Tico's Rainbeau Palace

(TICO stands outside on the street. His thigh and his stomach are bandaged. LORNA, slightly high, passes by on the street.)

~~LORNA~~
~~Well if it ain't Mr. Mobster himself. Look like you under repair.~~

~~(TICO looks at her and spits.)~~

~~Where's San Juan? I'm lookin' for him.~~

~~(TICO grabs her by the arm and pulls her over.)~~

~~TICO~~

~~Shut up bitch~~

~~LORNA~~

~~Who are you callin' me names. If I'ma bitch I'ma good one. I can sing too. What cha got for me? I say every tub on her own black bottom.~~

~~TICO~~

~~I don't make deals with street trash.~~

~~LORNA~~

~~Who you callin' trash! Don't mess with me!~~

~~(TICO shoves her hard so she almost falls. LORNA recovers, considers, and continues on her way.)~~

~~TICO~~

~~Musicians are like roaches.~~

(O'REILLY comes down the block, stops in front of the Rainbeau Palace.)

O'REILLY

Mornin'

(He looks at TICO wondering...)

TICO

...a bad fall that's all. None of your business.

O REILLY

We need to talk.

TICO

What about?

O'REILLY

Word's out. You didn't deliver the club.

(TICO turns away.)

Boss says you have 24 hours. Turn your back, you could be dead.

TICO

Business is good.

O'REILLY

Not for you. The chump change you been passing ain't cutting it. 24 hours or it's a ...

(TICO exits fast.)

Dead Man's alley!

(Blackout)

ACT II, Scene 15
On the Street

~~(Lights up on MOM just outside of the Variety Store opening bundles of newly delivered magazines.)~~

~~MOM~~
~~Life magazine... Downbeat, ...what's this?~~

~~(MOM opens a package.)~~

~~Eb-on-y. Free trial.~~

~~(MOM begins to leaf through the pages of the magazine as the lights cross fade to the front of Le Hot Blu.~~ DOC and VINCY are standing on the sidewalk. They look up as FRANKLIN'S voice bellows from inside the club.)

FRANKLIN
Did it light???

(Suddenly, a Marquee sign lights up in front of Le Hot Blu with the words "TONIGHT: VINCY DE HAVILAND WITH DOC HENSHEL.")

VINCY
Like Magic! What I've always dreamed of.

DOC
Our name in lights.

~~(EDDIE and KATHERINE come out of Le Hot Blu and join the other three in looking up at the new marquee.)~~

~~EDDIE~~
~~Nice job Franklin. That'll bring em in.~~

~~KATHERINE~~

You didn't put Prez up there, and he's the special guest tonight.

FRANKLIN

Just covering my back. You never know if he'll make it.

EDDIE

He'll be here.

DOC

No matter what, Vincy'll bring down the house.

(The sound of a shrill scream comes from the direction of the Variety Store.)

MOM

Ahhhhh! Oh my god!.

(FRANKLIN moves running towards the Variety Store.)

FRANKLIN

Ida....Ida what's wrong?

MOM

It's Melvin! Right here. A full size photo.

(noticing FRANKLIN)

Would you look at this! My son. A full page (she looks at the cover) in a colored magazine.

FRANKLIN

Let me see that! What! That's my daughter. (He reads) "A singing sensation!"

(KATHERINE, EDDIE, VINCY, AND DOC join FRANKLIN and MOM. LORNA comes racing down the block holding the same magazine.)

LORNA

Oooooeeeee weeee ya'll!!! Looke here. In ink on the pages of Eb- on- eee magazine

KATHERINE

Let me see that...

LORNA

Our very own super diva Vincy De Haviland right on page 3 (to Mom) and your proud son smilin' up from the 88's.

~~DOC~~

~~It's Vincy, Franklin. Right there on the page.~~

~~FRANKLIN~~

~~My baby...~~

~~DOC~~

~~With a full- length article about Le Hot Blu. There. You see it. That one.~~

~~VINCY~~

~~That's not me. My hair doesn't look all shiny and...~~

~~DOC~~

~~It's you Vincy. It's you.~~

~~(DOC and VINCY kiss.)~~

~~KATHERINE~~

~~Sure as I'm standing here.~~

~~VINCY~~

~~Look Dad. Look who's here...~~

~~(DUKE and DEE DEE enter the block escorting a cleaned up PREZ who comes in with his sax, wearing a beret. Silence falls on the room.)~~

~~FRANKLIN~~

~~Prez. So you're back with us.~~

~~PREZ~~

~~Look who's talkin'.~~

~~EDDIE~~

~~It's been awhile.~~

~~DEE DEE BOO~~

~~He's lookin' good man... carrying his horn.~~

~~PREZ~~

~~Heard I've got a set tonight. Thought I'd blow some notes here before I head to Paris.~~

~~VINCY~~

~~Paris!~~

~~PREZ~~

~~Just pulling your chain.~~

~~FRANKLIN~~

~~You never know. This is the place for dreams.~~

~~PREZ~~

~~Dreams…well we'll try.~~

~~(PREZ moves toward the club bringing the rest of the ENSEMBLE with him.)~~

~~Even when it's hot out there, it's cool in here. *Le Hot Blu.* Just like I remember it.~~

~~MOM~~

~~If someone has a camera we can take a picture and have it remember all of our faces frozen in this moment of happiness with a little drop of hope.~~

~~DOC~~

~~What are you saying Mom?~~

~~FRANKLIN~~

~~She's saying the nights on and starlight's coming fast. I hear the sound of something turning a note and rounding a corner. PREZ, go on inside. We gotta fix that Marquee.~~

~~(The club goes blue, and the ENSEMBLE enters as EDDIE brings out an extra banner that says "FEATURING PREZ CORSON." DOC plays a classic Art Tatum riff, and the music soars through the Harlem night as the band begins to play.)~~

#25 I'M JUST LISTENING FOR A CHANGE

FRANKLIN

I'M LISTENING FOR A CHANGE
DOES CHANGE HAVE A SOUND?
WILL IT HANG AROUND?
WITH A PROMISE THAT COMES TRUE
AT LE HOT BLU

IF I LISTEN TO YOU
WILL I HEAR IT?
CAN YOU HEAR A CHANGE

DOC

I'M LISTENING FOR A CHANGE

TURNING OFF MY BRAIN
LIFE ON LIFES TERMS,

VINCY
MAKES A DIFFERENCE WHEN YOU
WHEN YOU ENTER LE HOT BLUE.

IF YOU LISTEN TO ME
YOU WILL HEAR IT.
YOU WILL FEEL THE CHANGE.

VINCY & ENSEMBLE
WE'RE JUST LISTENING FOR CHANGE.
SOME RESPECT FOR THE DIFFERENCES
CARRIED FROM THE HEART
LEND AN EAR BETWEEN THE LINES
AT LE HOT BLU**.**

SO JUST LISTEN TO US
YOU WILL SURRENDER
TO THE WHISPER OF A SONG

WE'RE JUST LISTENING FOR A CHANGE AT

(The music segues into...)

#26 LE HOT BLU FINALE

ENSEMBLE
LE HOT BLU, LE HOT BLU
A WONDERFUL PLACE RIS-IN'
FROM AN EMPTY SPACE. STRETCHIN'
A TRACE OF THE PAST

A PLACE WHERE I CAN IMPROVISE,
THE NOTES I LOVE SO FULL OF GRACE
HARLEM LIFE ITS WARM EMBRACE.
LE HOT BLU

LE HOT BLU. LE HOT BLU
A BEAUTEOUS DAY IN HARLEM
STANDIN' ON THE EDGE
WAITING FOR NIGHT

STREETS ARE SHINING
PULSING AND SHIMMERING

BREATHING ALL THE COLORS OF LIFE.
SOULS ABOUT TO BURST IN ME.

THIS IS HOW LIFE SHOULD BE.
LE HOT BLU. LE HOT BLU.
FREE AND EASY. RIFFIN' ON THE FOURS
OPEINING UP THE DOORS TO MY WORLD AT

LE HOT BLU. LE HOT BLU. SO BLU

END OF PLAY