



The Guide to Musical Theatre

LA CAGE AUX FOLLES

Book by Harvey Fierstein (Torch Song Trilogy)
Music and lyrics by Jerry Herman (*Mame* and *Hello, Dolly!*)
Based on the play by Jean Poiret

Palace Theatre, Broadway - 21 August 1983 (1761 perfs)
London Palladium - May 7, 1986 (301 perfs)

As a long-running Paris boulevard comedy, later as a highly original classic film, and more recently as one of the decade's biggest Broadway musicals and a major hit in the West End at the Palladium, *La Cage aux Folles* has millions of fans. Jerry Herman's music and Harvey Fierstein's book add new dimensions to the story of the homosexual lovers whose twenty years of domestic tranquillity are shattered when a son, fathered during a one-night heterosexual fling, decides to marry the daughter of a bigoted politician.



STORY

Georges and his friend Albin, stage name *Zaza*, run a St Tropez nightclub, *La Cage aux Folles*, where the stars and the chorus line are mainly men in drag. Georges and his friend have lived happily together for many years. Their apartment is also home to their black 'maid' Jacob. And, as of today, Georges' son Jean-Michel (the result of a casual liaison some twenty years before). Jean-Michel has news. He's engaged to Anne. That's the good news. The bad news is that her father is head of the Tradition, Family and Morality Party, whose sworn aim is to close the local drag clubs. And her parents want to meet their daughter's future in-laws, including his real mother. Jean-Michel has described Georges as a retired diplomat, which could lead to trouble. Jean-Michel has a solution. Albin will absent himself for the visit - and all the furniture will be changed for something less spectacular. When he finds that he's to be marginalised, Albin is deeply hurt.

Has he not brought up Georges' son, man and boy, and been a good mother? He quits the club in a thoroughly justified huff.

Next morning Georges finds Albin on the beach and suggests he dresses up as a macho uncle Al. Why not? Back at the apartment, now transformed into a cell reminiscent of a monastery, Georges receives a telegram. Jean-Michel's mother Sybil isn't coming. What to do? A ring at the door. Anne's parents arrive. Albin flees to his room, emerging as a buxom forty-year-old. Jacob has burned the dinner. A trip to a local restaurant, *Chez Jacqueline*, belonging to an old friend of Albin and Georges, is quickly arranged. No one has briefed Jacqueline on the situation and she asks Albin for a song. Alas, as *Zaza*, he completely forgets himself and at the song's climax tears off his wig, revealing his true identity.

Back at the apartment the Dindons make their disapproval known. Their daughter is not persuaded. She's in love with Jean-Michel and will stay with him. The Dindons prepare to leave. Their way is blocked by Jacqueline, who has arrived with the Press! How piquant to have a picture of the most notorious anti homosexual with the most famous St Tropez homosexuals. Georges and Albin have a solution. Anne and their son must be allowed to marry, of course. And the Dindons will be allowed to escape - through *La Cage aux Folles* next door! And that is what happens, with the Dindons dressed as artistes of the revue, and Mr Dindon as the ugliest drag queen imaginable! So all ends happily - at least for everyone for whom it should.

MUSICAL NUMBERS:

1. We Are What We Are - Les Cagelles
2. A Little More Mascara - Albin and friends
3. With Anne On My Arm - Jean-Michel
4. With You On My Arm (Reprise) - Albin and Georges
5. The Promenade - Townspeople
6. Song On the Sand - Georges
7. La Cage Aux Folles - Albin and Les Cagelles
8. I Am What I Am - Albin
9. Masculinity - Georges and Albin
10. Look Over There - Georges
11. Cocktail Counterpoint - Georges, Dindon, Mme. Dindon, Jacob
12. The Best of Times - Albin, Jacqueline and Patrons

- *"It's a family show ... a glittering, fast-stepping extravaganza..."* New York Daily News
- *"... glitz, showmanship, good cheer ... unflagging tunefulness..."* New York Times
- *"Funny, glitzy, novel, saucy and with some decent human feelings in the ventricles of its sentimental heart..."* Daily Telegraph
- *"It catches at the heartstrings ... "* Daily Mail

THE CAST: (M 10, F3, chorus of 10M, 2F extras)

- | | | |
|---------------|---------------|-------------------------|
| • Georges | • Mme Renaud | • Hercule |
| • Chantal * | • Paulette | • Etienne |
| • Monique * | • Phaedra * | • Babette |
| • Dermah * | • Clo-Clo * | • Colette |
| • Nicole * | • Francis | • Tabarro |
| • Hanna * | • Jacob | • Pepe |
| • Mercedes * | • Albin | • Edouard Dindon |
| • Bitelle * | • Jean-Michel | • Mme. Dindon |
| • Lo Singh * | • Anne | • Les Cagelles" |
| • Odette | • Jacqueline | • St Tropez Townspeople |
| • Angeliqne * | • M. Renaud | |

THE SCENES:

Various interior and exterior settings

ORCHESTRATION

Reeds 1-5, Trumpets 1+2, Horns 1+2, Trombone 1+2, Drums, Percussion 1+2, Violins A+B, Cello, Bass, Guitar/Banjo, Harp, Accordion/Electric Keyboard

