



The Guide to Musical Theatre

COPACABANA

Music by Barry Manilow; Lyrics by Bruce Sussman and Jack Feldman; Book by Barry Manilow, Bruce Sussman and Jack Feldman

Opened at the Palace Theatre Manchester, 5 May 1994
Transferred to Prince of Wales Theatre, London - 23 June, 1994 (525 perfs)

STORY

The show opens in with a dreamlike sequence set in an elegant but otherworldly nightclub circa 1940.

Act I

Stephen is a songwriter suffering writer's block. He also acts as narrator but also becomes part of his imaginary settings and as a character in his forthcoming musical, that of leading man Tony.

Stephen's wife, Samantha, reminds him that their parents are coming for dinner which momentarily takes Stephen away from his imaginary world.

He turns to his drum machine as he begins to visualise the way his musical is going to take shape. It will be about a showgirl performing at the famous Copacabana in 1947. We are whisked to Grand Central Station where his heroine is about to arrive. Her name is Lola and she hails from Tulsa, Oklahoma. She is not alone, there are other would-be showgirls from St. Paul, or Fargo or Billing. Together they march down glittering, glorious Broadway.

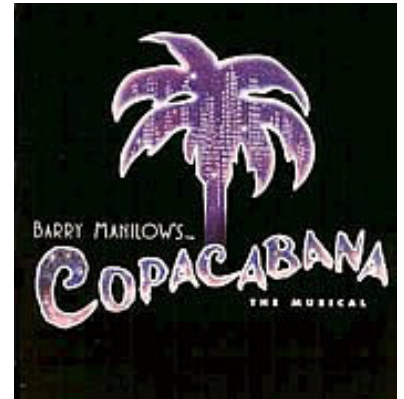
Back to the 1990s and Stephen's musical is beginning to take shape. His leading man will be called Tony - a songwriter by day and at night he works in the famous Copacabana nightclub.

Stephen becomes Tony and then, it's showtime. Tony and the Copa boys lead the entertainment before introducing the fabulous Copa girls.

After the show, Tony commiserates with Gladys, a worldly-wise cigarette girl, about the less glamorous side of showbusiness. Lola enters looking for a job and Tony is immediately head-over-heels in love. He and Gladys persuade Sam Silver, the Copa's hard-headed owner, to give Lola the chance to audition for the show the following afternoon.

Tony is desperate to have his songs published and auditions them for music publishers while Lola does the rounds of theatre producers. They both arrive at the Copa tired and exhausted, Lola fully expecting to fail this audition also. People who audition for the Copa are expected to arrive with their own pianist but Tony comes to the rescue and together with Gladys transform Lola - and her song - into star material.

Lola gets the job at the Copa and she and Tony obviously hit it off. Tony hadn't reckoned, however, with the arrival of Rico, the local Godfather, and his goons. He immediately takes a shine to Lola and invites her to his table for champagne. He tells her off his own magnificent nightclub, the Tropicana in Havana - the world's largest outdoor nightclub. Persuasion by word doesn't get Lola to come to Rico's nightclub but a drugged drink means he can kidnap her and transport her to Havana on his ocean clipper and thence to his opulent lair in Cuba.



Act II

Realisation dawns that Lola has been kidnapped. Tony vows to rescue her with the aid of Willy, one of the Copa's waiters. Sam Silver also offers to help but vacillates between his desire to help and his fear of Rico's machine-guns.

Meanwhile, in Havana, Lola is coming round from her drug induced sleep. Conchita, Rico's moll and the one ousted from favour by Lola, puts Lola firmly in the picture and a plan to help Lola escape begins to take shape.

Conchita returns to the Tropicana to rehearse her number for the show that evening and Rico decides that they should revive one of Conchita's past hits, only this time to star Lola. Conchita is furious and despite her protestations Rico is firm in his decision. More than ever Conchita decides that Lola must escape. Sam and Tony have by this time arrived in disguise and seek Conchita's help.

During the big Tropicana production number, Lola's escape is engineered and she and Tony finally melt into each other's arms.

Thus, the fantasy is over and Tony becomes once again, Stephen. Stephen is dejected now that his fantasy has been completed and it is then that he realises that his fictitious Lola is none other than his wife, Samantha. All ends happily.

MUSICAL NUMBERS:

1. Ay Caramba - The Copa Girls
2. Bolero de Amor - Rico and company
3. Copacabana - Company
4. Dancin' Fool - Tony and company
5. El Bravo! - Lola and the Pirates
6. Just Arrived - Lola and Women Hopefuls
7. Lola - Tony Man Wanted - Lola
8. The Mermaid's Tale - Mermaids
9. Night On the Town - Ensemble
10. Sweet Heaven - Tony & the Copa Girls
11. This Can't Be Real - Lola, Stephen
12. Welcome To Havana - Conchita and the Trop Boys
13. Who Am I Kidding? - Sam, Gladys & Doorman
14. Who Needs To Dream? - Tony

PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS:

- Tony/Stephen
- Lola/Samantha
- Rico
- Conchita
- Sam
- Gladys
- McManus
- plus large chorus of singers and dancers. There are also 16 named bit parts.

SCENES & SETTINGS

Act I

Scene 1 - Somewhere in Stephen's imagination - present day

Scene 2 - Stephen's studio, New York City - present day

Scene 3 - Grand Central Station and Times Square 1947

Scene 4 - Stephen's Studio - present day
Scene 5 - The Copacabana Club, evening, 1947
Scene 6 - The Copacabana Club, later that evening
Scene 7 - Various audition rooms - in and around New York
Scene 8 - The Copacabana Club - later that day
Scene 9 - Stephen's studio - present day
Scene 10 - The Copacabana Club - several nights later
Scene 11 - Havana - later that night.

Act II

Scene 1 - The Copacabana Club - later that night
Scene 2 - Backstage at the Copa - immediately following
Scene 3 - Outside the Copa - immediately following
Scene 4 - A bedroom in Rico's Havana compound - the next day /
Scene 5 - Stephen's studio - present day
Scene 6 - The Tropicana Nightclub in Havana - later that day
Scene 7 - The Tropicana - later that night
Scene 8 - The Copacabana Club
Scene 9 - Stephen's Studio - present day
Scene 10 - The Copacabana Club (final time)

ORCHESTRATION:

Keyboard #1
Keyboard #2
Keyboard #3
Drums
Percussion
Bass
Guitar
Trumpet db Flugelhorn
Trombone
Woodwind/Saxophone