

Excerpt terms and conditions



This excerpt is available to assist you in the play selection process.

You may view, print and download any of our excerpts for perusal purposes.

Excerpts are not intended for performance, classroom or other academic use. In any of these cases you will need to purchase playbooks via our website or by phone, fax or mail.

A short excerpt is not always indicative of the entire work, and we strongly suggest reading the whole play before planning a production or ordering a cast quantity.

Dramatic Publishing



FAME

Based on the screenplay by CHRISTOPHER GORE.

Conceived by DAVID DE SILVA.

Adapted to the stage by CHRISTOPHER SERGEL.



THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY

Fame

Drama. *Based on the screenplay by Christopher Gore. Conceived by David De Silva. Adapted by Christopher Sergel.* Cast: 9m., 15w. (extras as desired.) “You want fame? Well, fame costs. And right here is where you start paying.” “Right here” is the School of Performing Arts in New York City, and the first problem for the hundreds of young people eager to start paying their dues in pursuit of fame in the performing arts is to get accepted. As the play begins, the school is in the midst of auditioning applicants. They’re every size, shape and attitude. They’re scared, they’re brave, they’re rich and they’re poor. They’ve got nothing in common but a compelling dream—and each pursues it in a special way just as each must deal with the special problems of their various lives: Doris, pushed and prodded by her stage mother, has to learn to be beautiful on her own. Montgomery has to come to terms with his loneliness, his considerable talent and his need for a friend. Ralph must deal with his intensity and anger that threaten to drive him to the same fate that claimed his idol Freddie Prinze. Coco knows it all too quickly. Michael is so handsome and talented it would seem impossible for him to fail. Bruno, living with the music in his head and intolerant of the “moldie oldies” (such as Mozart), frustrates his teacher who hates his attitude but admires his talent. Leroy, an angry young man from the ghetto, is streetwise but a scholastic disaster whose passion for dancing could transform his life—if he’d allow it. The dramatic riches explored and developed in this play as the various students interact with each other and with their teachers—who must present a tough exterior but who care so very much—create an exciting theatrical tapestry in this useful and fulfilling play. Like the School of Performing Arts, this play goes to the essence of young people and of theatre. While this is a play and not a musical, there is some music and some dancing, though this may be adapted to suit the particular talents of your performers. *Area staging.*

10 ISBN: 0-87129-379-X

13 ISBN: 978-0-87129-379-4



9 780871 293794 0 1985

www.dramaticpublishing.com

Code: F-33



printed on recycled paper

FAME

Based on the screenplay by CHRISTOPHER GORE.

Conceived by DAVID DE SILVA.

Adapted to the stage by CHRISTOPHER SERGEL.



THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY

***** NOTICE *****

The amateur and stock acting rights to this work are controlled exclusively by THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY without whose permission in writing no performance of it may be given. Royalty fees are given in our current catalogue and are subject to change without notice. Royalty must be paid every time a play is performed whether or not it is presented for profit and whether or not admission is charged. A play is performed anytime it is acted before an audience. All inquiries concerning amateur and stock rights should be addressed to:

DRAMATIC PUBLISHING

P. O. Box 129, Woodstock, Illinois 60098.

COPYRIGHT LAW GIVES THE AUTHOR OR THE AUTHOR'S AGENT THE EXCLUSIVE RIGHT TO MAKE COPIES. This law provides authors with a fair return for their creative efforts. Authors earn their living from the royalties they receive from book sales and from the performance of their work. Conscientious observance of copyright law is not only ethical, it encourages authors to continue their creative work. This work is fully protected by copyright. No alterations, deletions or substitutions may be made in the work without the prior written consent of the publisher. No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, videotape, film, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher. It may not be performed either by professionals or amateurs without payment of royalty. All rights, including but not limited to the professional, motion picture, radio, television, videotape, foreign language, tabloid, recitation, lecturing, publication, and reading are reserved. *On all programs this notice should appear:*

"Produced by special arrangement with
THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY of Woodstock, Illinois"

©MCMLXXXV by
CHRISTOPHER SERGEL

Based upon the screenplay and the novelization of the screenplay
FAME/HOT LUNCH

Printed in the United States of America
All Rights Reserved
(FAME)

ISBN 0-87129-379-X

FAME
A Full-Length Play
for Fifteen Women and Nine Men, Extras as desired

C H A R A C T E R S

The Faculty

MRS. SHERWOOD teaches English
MISS BERG teaches dance
MR. FARRELL teaches acting
MR. SHOROFSKY teaches music

The Students

DORIS	SHIRLEY
COCO	LYDIA
PHENICIA	LEROY
MICHAEL	NICOLE
LISA	MARIANNE
DEIRDRE	HILARY
JOY	RALPH
BRUNO	MONTGOMERY

Relatives of the Students

MRS. SCHWARTZ the mother of Doris
ANGELO. Bruno's father
MARIO Bruno's uncle

and At the Cabaret

MISTRESS OF CEREMONIES

TIME: The Present

*PLACE: The School of Performing Arts
West 46th Street, New York City*



SPECIAL LYRICS FOR THE FINALE

WRITTEN BY

DAVID ROGERS.



ACT ONE

The houselights dim to black.

Then a pin spot comes up on the face of a sensitive, good looking young man at DC.

MONTGOMERY. I always worry that maybe people aren't going to like me when I go to a party. Isn't that crazy? Do you ever get kind of a sick feeling in the pit of your stomach when you dread things? Gee, I wouldn't want to miss a party for anything. But every time I go to one . . . I keep feeling that the whole world's against me. See, I've spent almost my whole life in military academies. My mother doesn't have a place for me where she lives. She . . . she just doesn't know what else to do with me. But you mustn't misunderstand about my mother. She's really a very lovely person . . . (There is more light and we can see that **MONTGOMERY** is standing in front of the curtains.) . . . I guess every boy thinks his mother is beautiful, but my mother really is. She tells me in every letter she writes how sorry she is that we can't be together more, but she has to think of her work. One time we were together, though. She met me in San Francisco once and we were together for two whole days. Just like we were sweethearts. It was the most

wonderful time I ever had. And then I had to go back to the military academy. Every time I walk into the barracks . . . (He has difficulty with the lines.) . . . I get kind of a depressed feeling. It's got hard stone walls . . . You know what I mean. Well, gee! (He chokes.) I guess I've bored you enough, telling you about myself.

ADULE MALE VOICE (from the darkness at L). Thank you.

MONTGOMERY (holding up a playbook, nervously). The monologue is from *The Dark at the Top of the Stairs*.

ADULT MALE VOICE. I know. (Firmly.) Thank you.

MONTGOMERY (unhappily). I goofed the last couple lines. Nervous I guess. If you'd like, I could . . .

(The man who has been sitting in a folding chair at L, his back to the audience, is MR. FARRELL, head of the Drama Department. He gets up and approaches MONTGOMERY.)

MR. FARRELL. That's okay. (He glances at his clipboard.) Montgomery MacNeill. You did very well. (As MONTGOMERY starts to say something more, he stops him.) And — thank you.

MONTGOMERY (stopping, defeated, exiting). Yes. Sure.

(MRS. SHERWOOD, an English teacher, enters L and comes up to MR. FARRELL as MONTGOMERY exits R.)

MRS. SHERWOOD (nodding after MONTGOMERY). How was that one?

MR. FARRELL. He did the lines without trying to put in a lot of feeling. I like that. The loneliness . . . the abandonment . . . They're already in the lines.

MRS. SHERWOOD. And?

MR. FARRELL (making a check on the clipboard). He's . . . in.

MRS. SHERWOOD. How many that you've heard today are . . . out?

MR. FARRELL (showing the clipboard to MRS. SHERWOOD).

Suppose one of these bad auditions was just extreme nerves — and the girl might have gone on to be another Jane Fonda or Colleen Dewhurst? Or the boy a young Sidney Poitier?

MRS. SHERWOOD. I'm glad I just teach English. I don't have to stand at the gate saying "no."

MR. FARRELL (waving the clipboard, with a big smile). I just had a yes. (He starts off L, calling as he goes.) Next.

MRS. SHERWOOD (looking front). Auditions for the School of Performing Arts, P.A. for short. The chance of being accepted is about one out of fifty-seven. Unless you're a boy applying to the Dance Department. They need boys. Or someone who can play violin. The Music Department needs strings.

(The curtain rises behind MRS. SHERWOOD to reveal a stage of several levels with areas that separately suggest a dance practice area, a music room, a part of a classroom, and an open central playing area. A few applicant STUDENTS are discovered onstage warming up bodies, vocal chords or rechecking audition scenes.)

MRS. SHERWOOD (continuing). This seedy wreck of a building was old when George Burns was a boy. Built in 1908 as a firehouse, it passed through a lot of hands, and when they ran out of sensible possibilities, someone allotted it to a high school with dance, music, and drama departments. (She considers the STUDENTS onstage.) The performing arts.

(More applicant STUDENTS enter and join those already onstage.)

Some of them come down the aisles, talking to each other as they come. Most are dressed in jeans but some are in tights or tutus. They carry bags, shoes, playbooks and instruments.)

MRS. SHERWOOD (continuing over the noise). Eartha Kitt was in the first graduating class. That was 1948 and four years from high school, she was on Broadway. Al Pacino was a student here and Melissa Manchester, Dom de Luise, Liza Minelli . . .

(A young applicant carrying a small bag, RALPH GARCY, pauses to hear this.)

RALPH (interrupting). And Freddie. *Freddie Prinze!*

MRS. SHERWOOD (regretfully). Freddie didn't make it. He had to be expelled. A troublemaker.

RALPH. So cool, Freddie.

MRS. SHERWOOD (wryly). So cool.

RALPH. He came back in a Cadillac Eldorado — with a couple blondes hanging around his neck. Came back to let the old school take a good look at him.

MRS. SHERWOOD. I remember.

RALPH. They'll look up to me like that when I come out of here.

MRS. SHERWOOD. First you have to get in.

RALPH. I'll get in! (As he exits.) Freddie's old school.

MRS. SHERWOOD (seeing it again). Freddie double-parked his Eldorado in front of the school and there were blondes hanging around his neck alright! Then a few months later, he blew his own head off. (She considers.) Maybe if we hadn't been so hard on him . . . (The alternative.) . . . Or if we'd been a lot harder . . . (She takes a breath, then notices the other APPLICANTS.) For Al Pacino. For Liza Minelli. For all of them.

It begins with the same postcard: "Report at 9:30 a.m. Board of Education, City of New York. School of Performing Arts. West 46th Street."

(A group of GIRLS comes on.)

NICOLE. My legs are too short.

LISA (to MARIANNE). I love your scarf.

MARIANNE. It's my sister's.

JOY. I have a scene prepared.

MARIANNE. She went to high school here and she thought it would be good luck.

JOY. I mean a monologue.

NICOLE. I hate getting turned down. I really do.

JOY. I don't sing, though.

NICOLE. I know I could make it if I had a good body.

JOY. I'll die if they ask me to sing.

LISA. I'm really nervous. (The GIRLS begin to warm up.)

MRS. SHERWOOD. All girls . . . for the Dance Department.

(A promise.) But there's a boy coming. As you see.

(LEROY JOHNSON, a tall, tough, semi-literate young man who moves with the natural grace of a born dancer, comes on L with an anxious, less graceful girl, SHIRLEY, who carries a handful of papers.)

MRS. SHERWOOD. Another boy asking to be expelled. Another troublemaker. (She is concerned.) Another chance for us to get him wrong – or get him right. (As LEROY and SHIRLEY approach her.) Names?

SHIRLEY. Excuse me, miss. You don't need his name. He's only my partner, see?

MRS. SHERWOOD. What school is he from?

SHIRLEY. He ain't into school. He's just helping me out, see, with my dancin' — he's just a partner. We've been rehearsing together, but it's me who's auditioning. Mullholland, see, Shirley, and I'm all fixed up. I filled in all your forms.

MRS. SHERWOOD (unmoved as SHIRLEY waves her handful of forms). He doesn't go past without giving me his name.

SHIRLEY (slowing down a little). Leroy's his name. But it's my audition. Shirley Mullholland. Two l's. (She confides.) Don't ask him to do any writing, miss. He gets real mean at that.

MRS. SHERWOOD. Doesn't he talk?

SHIRLEY. He ain't into conversation. Not till you know him.

MRS. SHERWOOD. Leroy what? (There is no reply.) If you want to audition . . . (She seems to have finally come to Leroy's attention.)

LEROY. I ain't come here for no *audition*! This my friend Shirley . . . She want to dance. I come here to help a friend, dass all. An' I ain't stayin' long.

MRS. SHERWOOD (correcting LEROY). You're not staying long.

SHIRLEY (quickly). Johnson. It's Leroy Johnson. Now can we go?

MRS. SHERWOOD (parting Leroy's jacket with her ruler, revealing a large hunting knife in a leather sheath). You're not staying at all unless you check your knife. (LEROY brushes Mrs. Sherwood's ruler aside.)

LEROY. You think I be's feeble or somethin'?

MRS. SHERWOOD (correcting LEROY). Am feeble.

LEROY. Man's gotta have a weapon.

MRS. SHERWOOD. You can pick up your weapon when you're finished.

LEROY. You kin pick up your head when I'm finished.

SHIRLEY. Leroy!

LEROY (to SHIRLEY). I ain't parkin' my blade with her little lame self!

SHIRLEY. She don't understand.

MRS. SHERWOOD. Speak English and I'll try harder.

LEROY. An' I'll try tap-dancin' on yo face right here and now!

MRS. SHERWOOD (eyeball to eyeball with LEROY). You're not dancing here or now until you check your knife. (SHIRLEY tugs at Leroy's sleeve. LEROY suddenly smiles dangerously at MRS. SHERWOOD. He whips out his knife.)

LEROY. You want it?

MRS. SHERWOOD (not flinching in the slightest). I want it.

LEROY. Shall I give it to you?

MRS. SHERWOOD (absolutely undaunted). Give it to me. (LEROY stares back but she is not going to give way. Suddenly, he breaks off this confrontation.)

LEROY. Promise you won't steal it? (He reverses the knife and hands it to MRS. SHERWOOD who gestures for LEROY and SHIRLEY to go R.)

SHIRLEY (to LEROY as she and LEROY go, relieved). Thanks, sugar.

LEROY. That's all right. (He opens his jacket for SHIRLEY to see his collection.) I got lotsa knives.

MRS. SHEROOD (as SHIRLEY and LEROY exit, considering the knife). That's how it started. That's the beginning.

(DORIS SCHWARTZ and MRS. SCHWARTZ enter L.)

MRS. SCHWARTZ (to DORIS). Don't be shy. Come with me. (She speaks sharply.) Doris . . .

MRS. SHERWOOD (addressing DORIS and MRS. SCHWARTZ). Can I help?

DORIS (holding up her postcard). I was told to report . . .

MRS. SCHWARTZ. Our audition.

MRS. SHERWOOD. Who are you?

MRS. SCHWARTZ (faintly irked). Her mother.

MRS. SHERWOOD (shaking her head). No . . .

MRS. SCHWARTZ. No what?

MRS. SHERWOOD. No mothers. (She starts DORIS and MRS. SCHWARTZ back L.) Please . . .

MRS. SCHWARTZ. She has a definite appointment. Doris, show her the postcard. (DORIS nervously holds up her postcard for MRS. SHERWOOD to see.)

MRS. SHERWOOD. Yes. That way. (As she goes.) You want to see Mr. Farrell. (As she exits, DORIS turns to MRS. SCHWARTZ.)

DORIS (burning with hushed embarrassment). I knew it! Just what I expected! *There are no other . . . mothers!*

MRS. SCHWARTZ (as if it were nonsense). Do you think I'd let you come without me?

DORIS. Am I a baby, stupid, not to be trusted out by myself? (She speaks bitterly.) And the way you made me dress . . . this is going to be the worst day of my entire life.

MRS. SCHWARTZ. We have to look our best. (She starts off.) Let's find this Mr. Farrell.

DORIS (as she is herded along). I look like Little Miss Muffet. All I need is a bowl of curds and whey . . . (As she and MRS. SCHWARTZ exit L.) And a spider.

(LYDIA comes on R, handing out numbers to DANCE APPLICANTS.)

LYDIA. Everyone needs a number.

MARIANNE (as ALL collect their numbers). Here we go! Countdown!

LISA. When I get nervous, my hair goes crazy.

NICOLE. The trouble is, I don't have a good body.

LISA. I sweat swimming pools.

JOY. I came here to dance. I don't want to sing, too.

MARIANNE. Performing arts. Dancing *and* acting . . . *and* singing.

JOY. Are we supposed to do everything?

(COCO enters.)

COCO (full of herself). It helps, baby. It sure helps!

JOY. Is that what you do?

COCO (emphatically agreeing). Me, I do everything! You want a watch?

LISA (grudgingly, to COCO). I'll watch. (She is concerned.) My hair is definitely going crazy.

NICOLE. All my family has big bones. It's not my fault. (As LYDIA comes up to LEROY with a number.)

LEROY (bristling). You ain't puttin' no nuthin' on me! Stick yo number on you little self or give it to some fool what wants it! I ain't come here for no numbers. I ain't got time.

LYDIA (calmly). I love your watch.

LEROY (after a pause). I got lotsa watches.

SHIRLEY (to LEROY, irked at his interest in LYDIA). You be quiet.

LEROY. I ain't come here to be quiet. (To LYDIA.) I come here to dance, pretty mama.

LYDIA. What's your name?

LEROY. Joe.

LYDIA. Joe what?

LEROY. Joe Mama and Dad done made you bad.

SHIRLEY (cutting into this). How long we hafta wait?

LYDIA. You want to dance, you wait your chance.

LEROY. I ain't come here for no waitin'-in-line. I'm a working man. Shirley here . . . she wanna dance, dass fine.

(MISS BERG, the dance teacher, enters R.)

MISS BERG. May I have your attention, please.

LYDIA. The boss lady.

LEROY. She best hasten this line 'cause I ain't stayin' long.

MISS BERG. Thank you. Now the first thing I want you to do is just to walk across the floor so we can get a good look at you and see what your bodies are like. (She nods to the piano player, onstage or off, who starts a march, and ALL start off R.)

NICOLE. It's not fair.

LISA (grimly). Radioactivity hitting my hair.

JOY (to herself). Keep your head up. Smile.

MARIANNE (adjusting her scarf as she works herself well). Good luck, Marianne.

MISS BERG (to LYDIA as she follows the STUDENTS off). Just one boy.

LYDIA (as she follows off R). I don't know if he can pass English, but I bet he can dance.

MISS BERG (as she and LYDIA go off). What makes you so sure?

(We hear a voice reciting Shakespeare from off L. During this, MR. FARRELL enters L and crosses with his clipboard to sit in his folding chair.)

GIRL'S VOICE (off L). "Deny thy father and refuse thy name . . . or, if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love . . . and

I'll no longer be a Capulet." (She pronounces it "Cup-YOU-let.")

MR. FARRELL (calling to her). I'll have an upper classman read that with you.

(MICHAEL, handsome and a little older than the others, comes on L, leafing through a small book.)

MR. FARRELL. Michael . . . please. It's around page forty.

MICHAEL. Got it.

(DEIRDRE enters L.)

DEIRDRE. Shall I start from the beginning?

MR. FARRELL (betraying a little anxiety). That's not necessary. Just give Michael — Romeo — his cue.

DEIRDRE (clearing her throat). "And I'll no longer be a Cup-YOU-let."

MICHAEL (reading). "Shall I hear more, or shall I speak at this?" (He glances at MR. FARRELL who gestures for him to go on with it.)

DEIRDRE (butchering her lines). "Tis but thy name that is my enemy. Thou art thyself, though not a Montag." What's a Montag? "It is nor hand . . . (MICHAEL smothers a laugh, cut short by a gesture from MR. FARRELL.) . . . nor foot, nor arm, nor face . . . nor any part belonging to a man."

MR. FARRELL. Pardon me. It's Mon-tag-ue.

DEIRDRE. What?

MR. FARRELL (carefully). Mon. Tag. You. Not Montag. Okay?

DEIRDRE (smiling sweetly). Thank you. (She continues.) "Oh, be some other name." (She stops.) I forgot where I was.