

***It Don't Mean a Thing* Cast List**

2 Male, 3 Female, Extra Singers M/F, Extras M/F

COCO ROMANO (F) singer at the Rhythm Club

GRETA FUGELSTAD (F) hostess at the Rhythm Club

PADDY O'BRIEN (M) owner of the Rhythm Club and lover of all things Irish

MAUREEN O'SHEA (F) the diva who brings Irish music to a jazz club

FRANKIE MALONE (M) emcee at the Rhythm Club

DO WAT SINGERS (M/F) back-up singers for Miss O'Shea

EXTRAS (M/F) servers and goons.

Sample Pages

*(Stage lights up about half. **BAND begins the show with an opening song** to signal the servers to seat the rest of the guests. After the song ends, lights fully up on the stage. Enter GRETA.)*

GRETA: *(To BAND.)* You're soundin' real good, everyone. *(Looks to the audience.)* Looks like we got a packed house here tonight.

(Enter COCO.)

COCO: Hey there, Greta.

GRETA: How's it going, Coco?

COCO: I can't complain. I mean, what good would complaining do in this gin joint?

GRETA: You look like you're gonna complain anyway.

COCO: Did you forget what day it is?

GRETA: It's Saturday.

COCO: The third Saturday of the month.

GRETA: *(Beat.)* Siren Saturday!

COCO: That's right. We get the superlative pleasure of the musical stylings of our favorite Irish singer. *(Beat.)* Oh no!

GRETA: O'Shea. Maureen O'Shea.

COCO: And Paddy just loves her.

GRETA: If you ask me, she's sort of a stiff.

COCO: No, the Statue of Liberty is sort of a stiff. Maureen O'Shea is just ...

GRETA: She has no ... no ...

COCO: Swing. And it don't mean a thing if it ain't got that swing.

ALL: *(Rush on stage from everywhere.)* Do wat do wat do wat do wah! *(ALL rush off stage.)*

GRETA: *(Stunned beat.)* What ... was that?

COCO: You mean, do wat was that! *(Laughs at her own joke.)*

GRETA: You're a laugh riot, Coco. What's with the "do wats"? Did you arrange that with the band?

COCO: Well, you see how the audience responded. I just heard two birds at that table *(Points to table 1 in the audience.)* join in. Except that clown. *(Singles out a person at table 1.)* He was singing, "Due when, due when, due when, due when, due now." I think his wife is pregnant.

GRETA: Again, hilarious.

COCO: And with swing, more and more of our customers will be joining in through the night. The rest of that table *(Points to table 1.)* will join in next time along with the table next to them *(Points to table 2.)*.

GRETA: I don't know if I trust their sense of rhythm. This could get ugly.

COCO: Aw, it will be fine.

GRETA: *(In a lower voice.)* Well, don't expect that table to join in. *(Points to Fugelstad table. See PRODUCTION NOTES.)*

COCO: Why not?

GRETA: Those are my Norwegian relatives. A whole table of Fugelstads.

COCO: So?

GRETA: Well, let's just say they don't have a sense of humor. And they couldn't find a beat in a field of turnips.

(FRANKIE enters.)

FRANKIE: Who can't find a beat?

GRETA: *(Points to Fugelstads.)* My Norwegian relatives.

FRANKIE: Well look at that. A whole table of Fugelstads?

COCO: Imagine that.

FRANKIE: Well, if they can't swing, they came on the right night. It's Siren Saturday. Maureen O'Shea will be singing.

GRETA: Yeah, we know. A whole hour of "Too-ra-loo-ra-loo-ral." A song so boring that half of our customers fall asleep.

COCO: There's a reason it's called an Irish lullaby.

GRETA: And the other half of our customers cry so much they look like our staff on payday.

COCO: Well, Maureen's not here yet, so for now, let's get this place hoppin'.

FRANKIE: Good idea, Coco. *(To audience.)* Welcome, ladies and gents, to the Rhythm Club! We've got a full evening of entertainment for you tonight and a special guest singer, Maureen O'Shea! *(Leads everyone in applause.)* Waiters, this looks like a thirsty crowd. Get them something to drink. *(Exits.)*

GRETA: Coco, for my relatives, whatever you do, don't serve them --

PADDY: *(Enters.)* Greta! The diva needs your assistance.

GRETA: *(To PADDY.)* In a sec. *(To COCO.)* Coco, just don't serve them --

PADDY: Now, Greta! *(Exits.)*

GRETA: All right, already! I'm coming! *(Exits quickly.)*

COCO: Don't serve them what, Greta? What? *(Looks at Fugelstads.)* She must mean alcohol. They don't look like they can hold their liquor. I'll make sure they only get water. *(To audience.)* Let's get this show going, everyone! First up, we've got music from the [insert band name]. They're starting us off with [insert title of song].

*(COCO leads the audience in applause as she exits. **BAND plays song 1.** Lights up half on the audience. SERVERS bring drinks to the tables. See PRODUCTION NOTES.)*

ROUND 1

(At the end of the song, lights down on the audience. GRETA and COCO enter.)

GRETA: This place is hoppin' tonight!

COCO: Too bad Maureen's gonna be singin'. I don't know if this crowd wants any Irish tunes tonight.

GRETA: Well, it don't matter. Paddy does the hiring, and he's a sap for the Irish songs. *(Imitates PADDY.)* "Too-ra-loo-ra-loo-ral reminds me of the old sod."

COCO: "Old sod" my left foot. Paddy was born in Brooklyn. *(Imitates PADDY.)* "I love me Irish songs because I'm so Irish."

GRETA: *(Continues imitation as COCO laughs.)* "I'm so Irish that me second cousin is a Leprechaun. I'm so Irish that even me teeth are green. *(PADDY enters behind GRETA, and COCO stops laughing.)* I'm so Irish that me liver looks like a four-leaf clover." *(Notices that COCO has stopped laughing.)* Paddy's right behind me, isn't he?

PADDY: I'm so Irish that I'll drive all the snakes out of this place ... Greta.

COCO: So you're St. Paddy, now?

PADDY: Stay out of this, Coco.

GRETA: *(Turns around to face PADDY.)* Oh, come on Paddy. We was just funnin' you. Don't all Irish have a great sense of humor?

PADDY: Not since you Norwegians burned down our monasteries.

GRETA: I had nothin' to do with that.

PADDY: All Norwegians are guilty, Greta Fugelstad.

GRETA: But I was born in Hoboken.

PADDY: I don't care where you were born. Viking blood is burning through your veins and ... *(Looks at Fugelstad table.)* Hey, who's the stiff out there drinking just water?

COCO: Your worst nightmare.

PADDY: Huh?

COCO: Greta's Norwegian relatives.

PADDY: A whole table of Fugelstads? What are they doing here?

GRETA: They're depressed.

COCO: And they needed some jazz music to cheer them up?

GRETA: They think jazz music is awful. But by listening to it, they can enjoy their depression even more. If it were a little darker in here, they would be in paradise.

PADDY: Well, they're in luck, since Maureen O'Shea is here tonight. She'll help them with their depression.

COCO: I'll say.

MAUREEN: *(From offstage, warming up, sings.)* Too-ra-loo-ra-loo-ral.

PADDY: *(Gets a dreamy look on his face.)* The Diva!

MAUREEN: *(Misses the key on the last note and keeps trying to hit it.)* Too-ra-loo-ra-li. Li. Li-li-li.

PADDY: How beautiful.

GRETA: *(Aside to COCO)* Talk about your Li-li-lies.

MAUREEN: Too-ra-loo-ra-loo-ral.

PADDY: *(Wipes tears from his eyes.)* It reminds me of me dear old Mum back at the old sod.

MAUREEN: Hush, now don't you cry.

GRETA: *(Aside to COCO.)* Too late.

MAUREEN: Too-ra-loo-ra-loo-ral. *(Misses the key on the last note and keeps trying to hit it.)*
Too-ra-loo-ra-li. Li. Li-li-li.

GRETA: This is agonizing.

COCO: At least your relatives look deliriously depressed.

GRETA: Yep. I'd better get some lutefisk.

COCO: What's that?

GRETA: It's gelatinous cod pickled in lye.

COCO: Ugh. Who would eat that?

GRETA: It's the national dish of Norway.

COCO: You're serving it to your relatives?

MAUREEN: *(Enters.)* Li-li-li.

GRETA: I'm shoving it in my ears. *(Looks at MAUREEN.)* The burning lye is bound to be less painful. *(Exits.)*

PADDY: Miss O'Shea. Can I say again what a pleasure it is to have you here tonight? What can I do for you?

MAUREEN: I've come to discuss the arrangements in my dressing room.

COCO: At least you have a dressing room. I have to look in the chafing dish to put on my lipstick.

MAUREEN: *(Looks at COCO critically.)* That explains a lot. *(COCO glares at her.)* Patrick, my cheese plate lacks Gorgonzola.

PADDY: Oh, I'm sorry Miss O'Shea.

MAUREEN: And you left a bottle of Château Lafite, vintage 1897?

PADDY: Yes. It was the most expensive wine I could find.

MAUREEN: But it's a red wine.

PADDY: Yeah?

MAUREEN: You never serve red wine with veined cheeses. The injury to my palate would have been irreparable.

COCO: (*Sarcastically.*) Wouldn't that be a shame.

MAUREEN: And someone has been smoking in this building.

COCO: It's a gin joint. What do you expect?

MAUREEN: I expect that all efforts are made to protect ... the voice.

COCO: The voice? Like the voice is a different person?

PADDY: Coco ...

COCO: Does the voice have its own dressing room, too?

PADDY: Coco, don't --

COCO: Is the voice as big as the ego? If so, you don't need a microphone. It can fill the whole place.

PADDY: Coco!

COCO: The whole block, even.

MAUREEN: Patrick, I do not have to stand here and take this verbal abuse. If you need me, I will be in my dressing room, not eating cheese and not drinking wine. (*MAUREEN exits.*)

PADDY: Coco, you can't talk that way to her.

COCO: Which "her" are we talking about? The woman, the voice, or the ego?

PADDY: We can't risk losing our singer.

COCO: Hey! I'm a singer, too, you know.

PADDY: Yeah, sorta. Your songs are, you know, common.

COCO: What do you mean by that?

PADDY: It doesn't appeal to cultivated tastes.

COCO: And why not?

PADDY: It's got too much swing.

COCO: Well, it don't mean a thing if it ain't got that swing.

ALL: *(Rush on stage from everywhere.)* Do wat do wat do wat do wat do wah! *(ALL rush off stage.)*

PADDY: *(Stunned beat.)* What ... just happened?

COCO: I'm not sure, but it's catching. Did you notice those two tables over there *(Points to tables 1 & 2.)* were thinking of joining in? I saw it in their faces. They will definitely join in next time. And I think that they'll add ... jazz hands.

PADDY: Jazz hands?

COCO: *(Demonstrates.)* Jazz hands.

(FRANKIE enters.)

PADDY: Those two tables will sing "Do Wat" and do jazz hands?

FRANKIE: Who's doing jazz hands?

COCO: Here, watch this. *(Beat.)* It don't mean a thing if it ain't got that swing.

(ALL rush on stage, but this time they just stare expectantly at tables 1 & 2. Improvise with their reaction. Repeat Coco's line to prod them if necessary. ALL exit when tables finish the "do wah.")

FRANKIE: I didn't catch what they were saying.

COCO: Do wat do wat do wat do wat do wah. *(Singles out a man at table 2.)* Except for that palooka. He was saying, "You who, you who, you who, you who, you wow." I think he's got a thing for that doll over there *(Points to another woman.)*, and he was trying to get her attention.