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Kennedy

A Musical Celebration

Book, music and lyrics by
Allan Jay Friedman
and
Leslie Bricusse

Samuel French — London
www.samuel french-london.co.uk



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KENNEDY

First performed under the title *One Shining Moment* in May 1983 at Chicago's Drury Lane Theatre featuring Kevin Anderson as John F. Kennedy, Megan Mullally as Jackie Kennedy and Alan Ruck as Lyndon B. Johnson, produced by Leonard and Emese Green of Tardy-Green Productions and directed by Dennis Rosa.

Originally performed by a cast of young people, the musical enjoyed the Theatre's longest run.

2012 Chicago workshop produced by Proscenium Productions, LLC.

"If I told you what I really know about the assassination, it would be very dangerous to this country."

J. Edgar Hoover, F.B.I.

CHARACTERS

John Fitzgerald Kennedy

Jackie Kennedy

Joe Kennedy Sr

Rose Kennedy

Joe Kennedy Jr

Bobby Kennedy

Teddy Kennedy

Lyndon B. Johnson

Richard Nixon

Abraham Lincoln

Caroline (Child)

John Jr (Child)

The many minor characters in the story will be played by a small group of actors, each of whom will play several roles apiece – as newscasters, advisors, critics, reporters, J.F.K.’s many enemies, girlfriends and political adversaries, etc.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT I

PROLOGUE

- SCENE 1 The beach at Hyannis Port, 1959
- SCENE 2 The Family room at the Kennedy home
in Hyannis Port
- SCENE 3 John's campaign
- SCENE 4 The Convention
- SCENE 5 The Kennedy's room at the convention
- SCENE 6 John's campaign
- SCENE 7 John's campaign
- SCENE 8 The campaign continues
- SCENE 9 A snowy day in Washington, D.C.
- SCENE 10 A news conference
- SCENE 11 The White House Conference Room
- SCENE 12 A Night Club
- SCENE 13 The Oval Office
- SCENE 14 The Oval Office

ACT II

- SCENE 1 Inside the White House and the Oval Office
- SCENE 2 John's Soliloquy
- SCENE 3 The Oval Office
- SCENE 4 The Family room at the Kennedy home
in Hyannis Port
- SCENE 5 The Oval Office
- SCENE 6
- SCENE 7 The Oval Office
- SCENE 8 The Conference room
- SCENE 9 Various platforms
- SCENE 10 The Oval Office
- SCENE 11
- SCENE 12 Inside a White House bedroom
- SCENE 13 Dallas, Texas
- SCENE 14 Dallas, Texas
- Scene 15 Ending

THE STAGE DESIGN

An open set which can be transformed into appropriate settings like the beach, Family Room, Oval Office, Conference Room, suggestions of Camelot, etc

Several large TV screens are situated around the stage to display and rear project photos, film of the Kennedys, America and the world. The main screen will be made of translucent strips which the actors can walk through.

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MUSICAL NUMBERS

ACT I

- | | | |
|-----|---|---------------------------------|
| 1. | Fairy Tale | Jackie (or ensemble) |
| 2. | One Shining Moment | John |
| 3. | My Son, the President | Joe Sr |
| 3a. | My Son, the President (<i>Reprise</i>) | Joe Sr/Bobby/Teddy |
| 4. | The New Frontier | John |
| 5. | Question Time | Reporters/John |
| 6. | Compromise | Joe Sr/John/Bobby/Teddy |
| 7. | Nixon's Nemesis | Nixon/Lady Reporter |
| 8. | Love-Hate | Jackie/John's Girlfriends |
| 9. | I've Got to Leave Him | Jackie/Joe Sr/Bobby/Teddy |
| 10. | That's My Boy | Joe Sr/Rose/Bobby/Teddy/Company |
| 11. | Here We Are | Jackie/John |
| 12. | Decisions | John/Advisors |
| 13. | Imitate the Sun | John |

ACT II

- | | | |
|-----|---|--------------------------|
| 14. | Fairy Tale (<i>Reprise</i>) | Jackie (or ensemble) |
| 15. | We've Just Begun | John/Bobby/Teddy/Jackie |
| 16. | L.B.J. | L.B.J./Company |
| 17. | The Man He Is | Rose/Joe Sr |
| 18. | A Man Who Can't be Bought | Kruschev/Castro/Ensemble |
| 19. | A Simple Dream | John |
| 20. | Decisions (<i>Reprise</i>) | Advisors |
| 21. | Some People Say | John |
| 22. | Imitate the Sun (<i>Reprise</i>) | Company |
| 23. | Stop That Man | Anti-Kennedy Group |
| 24. | Seeing it Through | John/Jackie |
| 25. | Fairy Tale (<i>Reprise</i>) | Jackie |
| 26. | A Simple Dream (<i>Reprise</i>) | Jackie |
| 27. | Imitate the Sun (<i>Reprise</i>) | Company |
| 28. | Imitate the Sun (<i>Bows</i>) | Company |

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ACT I

Montage: film, photographic images and newspaper headlines are projected onto an outsize TV screen: Eisenhower as President, Jimmy Hoffa elected President of the Teamsters, Fidel Castro's war to take over Cuba from Baptista, the 1950s recession, 6 million unemployed but the White House denies it, Alaska and Hawaii become 49th and 50th states, J.F.K. wins second term Senate Seat, the United States detonates a nuclear warhead, the Mafia meets re: Castro closing down their billion dollar a year gambling casinos in Cuba, Rosa Park refuses to move to the back of the bus — which launches the Civil Rights Movement — Marilyn Monroe becomes a superstar, the Barbie doll makes her debut, Khrushchev visits the United States and is denied entry into Disneyland, TV becomes the marvel of the age. The final screen image is of the beach at Hyannis Port

PROLOGUE

Lights up on Jacqueline Kennedy, elegantly dressed in the trademark Oleg Cassini – Courrèges style she made famous. A portrait of J.F.K. hangs over the stage

Music No. 1: Fairy Tale

Jackie (or Ensemble) Once there was a prince
Like in an old fairy tale.
Life smiled on the prince
And yet his future was frail.

He married a young princess
Life was all love and laughter,
No one told them it wouldn't be
Happy ever after.

Some princes die young
And in time some become kings,

When fate takes a hand,
What man has planned
Can take wings.
It's a sad and a scary tale,
And it isn't a fairy tale!

The music continues under

The Lights cross-fade

John Kennedy appears

John Good evening. My name is John Fitzgerald Kennedy. I was the thirty-fifth President of the United States for a period of one thousand-thirty-six days starting on a snowy morning in Washington D.C. on January twenty-first, nineteen sixty-one, and ending on a sunny afternoon in Dallas, Texas, on November twenty-second, nineteen sixty-three. A great deal has been written and said about me, and no two people ever seem to have the same point of view. But the one thing they all agree upon is that there was something special happening in this country at that time — some mysterious something that even I can't explain. Perhaps, if we look back together at that not-so-far-off time, we may be able to discover precisely what that special something was, with which so many people identify.

The Lights cross-fade

SCENE 1

The beach at Hyannis Port, 1959. It is early evening. John Kennedy, wearing rolled-up blue jeans and a t-shirt, walks on the beach. We hear the sounds of the ocean as John looks out to sea

Music No. 2: One Shining Moment

John

I always thought
There was a place for me
To be the man
That I was born to be.

I always thought
I had a destiny
So far beyond
What I could see.

And when I found
That time and place for me,
One shining moment
Would be mine.

I'd show the world
How it was meant to be,
And like the sun
My life would shine.

But where's that one shining moment
I thought was mine?

Music continues under

Light comes up on John's dead brother, Joe Jr, sitting on a rock in the mist. Joe Jr is wearing a pilot's uniform and has a football in his hand

Joe Jr You can have your shining moment, Jack... that is, if you're willing to die for it!

John Why did you fly that suicide mission, carrying that damn nitroglycerin? That was crazy, Joe.

Joe Jr Someone had to do it! And you know what Dad always taught us — second best's a loser — and you'd already become a war hero with P.T. one-oh-nine.

John So big brother risked his life to be a winner... and got killed.

Joe Jr If they're going to get you, they can get you anywhere. (*Pause*) It's time you ran for President, Jack.

John That's a joke. I lost the Vice Presidential nomination to Estes Kefauver. You would have won that nomination, Joe, if only you hadn't gone and got yourself killed in that goddamn war.

Joe Jr You were lucky you lost. If you'd won, your political career would be over!

John Why?

Joe Jr Because Stevenson and Kefauver lost the election. Besides, that was nineteen fifty-six, Jack. This is nineteen fifty-nine.

John Joe, I have to admit something.

Joe Jr What's that?

John I'm not secure enough to run for the Presidency.

Joe Jr (*laughing*) You! The all-time competitor, insecure?

John It's true, Joe. Besides, I'm a Catholic, and no Catholic has ever gotten in. And to be honest, I don't feel I accomplished a hell of a lot in my three terms in the Congress and two in the Senate either.

Joe Jr That may be because the only place of true power is the Presidency. That's where it's at, brother!

John Dad's been pushing this since nineteen fifty-eight... like it's inevitable!

Joe Jr It is!

John Me, President? That's crazy! Think about it, Joe: I have a bolt in my back, I have Addison's disease, I'm Catholic. Jackie and I just lost our baby girl, and my marriage is more or less on the rocks!

Joe Jr (*smiling*) That makes you the perfect presidential candidate! You represent everything the country's suffering from.

John (*laughing*) You know your sense of humour's improved since you died!

Joe Jr That's because I've lost my limitations, which is why I can think of you as President!

John Well, I can't.

Joe Jr (*nodding*) Like Dad always says, we're not this rich for nothing!

John What does that mean?

Joe Jr It means we were born to serve our country.

John I'm a sceptic. I believe we make our own lives.

Joe Jr Do we? Our sister, Kathryn was killed in a plane crash, her husband and me in the war, and Rosemary was born retarded. Were those their choices?

John You were always the winner, Joe... the athlete, the scholar... the one Dad picked to be President... not me.

Joe Jr Yeah, and look what happened to me! Don't sell yourself short, Jack. You're a Pulitzer Prize-winning author.

John (*smiling*) I had a little help on “Profiles in Courage.”

Joe Jr (*nodding*) OK, so Ted Sorensen added a little polish. But it was your idea to write about brave men who had the courage of their conviction and were destroyed because of it. (*He pauses*) Anyway, why are you afraid of running? It’s your chance to achieve something I didn’t!

John I’m not afraid of running — I’m afraid of losing,

Joe Jr To win, you have to be willing to lose.

John You’re just like Dad — you know how to take a lemon and make lemonade out of it! What am I looking for? The Holy Grail?

Joe Jr You’re looking for the truth about what the hell’s going on in this screwed-up world and who’s responsible! (*He starts to turn away, then...*) Jack...

John Yes?

Joe Jr Be careful.

Joe Jr throws the football to John, and disappears into the mist

The music builds (Music 2 continues)

John Could be that now’s
 The time and place for me —
 For that sweet moment
 To be mine.
 To show the world
 How it was meant to be,
 And like the sun,
 For me to shine.

 To take that one shining moment,
 And make it mine.

(*Speaking*) I’d like you to meet my family. My beautiful wife, Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy, who I married September twelfth, nineteen fifty-three. My father Joe, my mother Rose, my brothers Bobby and Teddy, my sisters Eunice, Pat and Jean. Rosemary couldn’t be there that day — and that tall one over there — that’s me. This picture was taken at our family’s summer home in Hyannis Port, Massachusetts, in July nineteen-fifty-nine. I had just turned forty-two years old, and completed three inconspicuous terms in Congress and two in the Senate, distinguished only by not winning the Democratic Vice-Presidential nomination from Senator Estes Kefauver in nineteen-fifty-six. I had decided it was time to seek my personal fulfillment on

another level. My father always said the only place of real power was the Presidency. My family agreed with him. I was the only holdout.

The Lights cross-fade

SCENE 2

The Family room at the Kennedy home in Hyannis Port

Rose (*to the family*) Where's Jack?

Teddy On the beach.

Bobby He always goes there when he's confused.

Joe Sr He's a Kennedy. Kennedys aren't supposed to be confused.

Teddy Dad, I'm a Kennedy. And I'm confused as hell.

Joe Sr You're different, Teddy.

John enters with the football in his hand

Joe Sr Well, son, have you decided to run for President? You know your brother Joe was going to...

John (*cutting him off*) All you ever talk about is Joe, Dad. It's gotten so bad that now I'm even seeing him!

Rose (*smiling*) You two boys were always so competitive!

John I was never any competition for Joe!

Joe Sr Well this is your chance to be!

John That's just it, Dad. I'm tired of living in the shadow of my older brother.

Joe Sr So this is your chance to come out of that shadow.

John I just want to be a writer.

Joe Sr Anybody can be a writer but only one man in a billion is destined to become President of the United States. Why, with the family money, my contacts and your political charm, you can't lose.

Teddy He's right, Jack. The immediate family's almost big enough to carry the popular vote.

Bobby (*grinning*) One of the few pluses of being Catholic.

Rose (*fervently*) I'll organize some of my serious tea parties.

John (*looking around at his determined, enthusiastic and united family; incredulously*) You're all assuming I'm going to run... like it's inevitable!

Music No. 3: My Son, the President

Joe Sr (*speaking*) It is!

(To Rose; singing) I'm telling you, Rose,
He will be President.
He's a natural born
White House resident.

And once that he's made it,
It will be Bobby's turn.
And after Bobby will come Teddy,
And Daddy will be ready
With hard-earned money to burn!

I don't care what you do
Once you get there!
My singular concern
Is that you get there!
And when you do,
Won't we be some quartet there!

John As you can see, my father was a very humble, modest, unambitious man. His guiding principal was to win at all costs — and it cost him plenty! He never faulted my performances, as long as it took both of us where *he* wanted to go. I inherited my ruthless ambition from him, and my blinding faith from my mother. The only way I could cope with these conflicting legacies was to develop my own sense of humour. *(He turns to Joe Sr)* Dad, has it ever occurred to you I might not get the nomination?

Joe Sr *(gathering his three sons around him; speaking)* Not for one moment!

(Singing) Don't talk about lose, Jack
Cos that's the greatest sin!
Just work your asses off
And you will always win!
If it takes a fortune,
Or just a simple ploy,
We're gonna wheel and deal,
Be made of steel,
Until we've won it, boy!
I can't wait for that happy day
When I present
My pride and joy,
My blue-eyed boy,
My son, the President!

John (*to Joe Sr*) I still haven't decided to run, Dad!

Joe Sr (*waving the thought aside*) But you will! Second best's a loser, Jack.

John It's that attitude that killed Joe.

Joe Sr And, it's that attitude that'll make you President!

Music No. 3a: My Son, the President (*Reprise*)

Joe Sr I'm telling you, boys,
It's no great mystery,
About a year from now
We will make history!

Joe Sr }
Bobby } You're gonna see three brothers,
Teddy } Their mother's blue-eyed boys,
Go out and knock 'em dead,
Like Daddy said,
With talent, charm and poise!

Joe Sr That charmin' Boston Brahmin set
Will all repent the day old Joe says,
"Do you know my son, the President?"

John And so it was that Joe Sr replaced Joe Jr with me and began to envisage me as King Arthur, and my support team as the Knights of the Round Table. Bobby became my Lancelot, fighting all of my battles for me. He was the most dynamic of all my brothers, and knew exactly where he was going by the time he was three. He was the best organizer I ever saw. In touch football, it was always Bobby's team that won. That's because he organized it with ruthless efficiency, and made the most daring plays. And he continued to do that throughout his life. Thank God he was on my team. Jackie of course, was Queen Guinevere. Like every other woman, she was looking for a love that was longer than life and stronger than death! But first we had to see if I could pull the sword from the stone!

SCENE 3

John's campaign

Reporter 1 (*to Joe Sr*) I've never seen a family as close as yours, Mr Kennedy. It's as though you don't need anyone else. How did you raise such a family?

Joe Sr Years ago, Rose and I decided that our children were going to be our best friends, and that we could never see too much of them. We're a self-contained unit. If any one of us wants to go sailing, play golf, go walking, or just talk, there are always more Kennedys eager to join in!

Reporter 2 (*to John*) Senator Kennedy, how do you explain your action on P.T. one-oh-nine? You dove into the icy waters of the South Pacific to save a naval buddy!

John It was completely involuntary. They sank my boat.

Reporter 3 Your father said it was important that his sons be equipped to deal with the outside world, and his daughters remain within the valued framework of their religion. Exactly what did he mean by that?

John He meant the boys would go to Harvard and the girls to parochial school.

Music No. 4 starts under

The Lights cross-fade to John

John (*growing in confidence*) "For I stand tonight facing west on what was once the last frontier. From the lands that stretch three thousand miles behind me, the pioneers of old gave up their safety, their comfort and sometimes their lives to build our new West... Their motto was not "Every man for himself," but, "All for the common cause!" Today some would say that those struggles are all over, that all the horizons have been explored, that all the battles have been won, that there is no longer an American frontier. But, the problems are not all solved and the battles are not all won, and we stand today on the edge of a new frontier — the frontier of the nineteen sixties, a frontier of unknown opportunities and paths, a frontier of unfulfilled hopes and threats..."

Music No. 4: The New Frontier

(*Singing*) We must climb to the hilltop
 To find the world we seek.
 With confidence and daring,
 We'll reach the highest peak.

(*Speaking*) The New Frontier
 Of which I speak
 Won't be achieved this year,

(*Singing*) But we must begin,
 That much is clear.

(*Speaking*) The time has come
 To take a stand,
 To take the reins,
 To take command.

 We must pursue our quest,
 Face each new test,
 Not fearful of mistakes.
 Faith and understanding
 Are what it really takes.

(*Singing*) And together
 We will stake the claim
 That awaits the last pioneer,
 That brave new world
 Within us all
 I call
 The New Frontier.

Great cheering from an unseen crowd

(*Speaking*) My confidence was growing, but I was haunted by the recurring dream that I might lose — and my father would cut off my allowance. So I decided not to lose. On July thirteenth, nineteen-sixty, at the Democratic Convention in Los Angeles, California, Eleanor Roosevelt was heading a movement from the floor to get Adlai Stevenson the Presidential nomination. It was an incredible atmosphere. For some reason it made me think of the Dempsey-Tunny fight!

The Lights cross-fade

SCENE 4

The 1960 Convention

Delegate 1 (*off*) Mr Chairman, Wyoming's vote makes a majority for Senator Kennedy.

The cheering redoubles

Delegate 2 (*off*) Mr Chairman, Utah makes a motion that the rules be suspended and that Senator John F. Kennedy be chosen the Democratic Party's candidate for President of the United States by acclamation.

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