

“BEYOND A MUSICAL DOUBT”

SYNOPSIS

In the prologue, the Judge is giving instructions to a Jury in the trial of Richard Fletcher who is on trial for a crime that will remain unknown to the audience. Once the Jury is released into the deliberation room, Richard laments on how he came to this moment (*Lost In The Darkness*). In Scene 1, we are thrown into the deliberation room where the Jury begin their discussion of the evidence and take their first vote, 21 guilty, one not guilty, with the not guilty verdict belonging to Molly. (*Good and Evil*).

The Jury views the first piece of evidence, a rehearsal of the musical in question. Throughout this number we are introduced to the players in this production: the Stage Manager, Director, Leading Man, Leading Lady, Supporting Leads and the remainder of the company (*We Share Everything/Lullaby of Broadway*). At the end of the number, Richard, who has been hired by the producers because of his acute ability to get the best out of every person, sweeps down the aisle disgusted with the choreography and staging that he has witnessed on stage. After an altercation with Aretha, the show’s original director, Richard reaches out to the actors in the show in an effort to draw artistry out of them. He immediately discovers a connection with the supporting lead, Sheila and dances a sensual and exciting dance with her (*I’m Alive*). Richard continues his exploration of Sheila’s talents leading her through one of the numbers from the show in a Svengali-esque way while Elisabeth, Richard’s previous fiancée watches from a distance and remembers when Richard, who left the industry for unknown reasons, had once used the same technique on her (*Music of the Night/Easy as Life*).

Back in the deliberation room, Samantha has joined Molly in voting not guilty. Both Jerry and David are furious that Samantha was influenced by Richard, which leads to Samantha questioning their hypocritical morals. Ariel brings the room back to order and more evidence is presented. In rehearsal, Richard is directing Jack and Daryl through a comic number that shows the hypocrisy of men displaying their needs and their wants (*A Miracle Would Happen*). Following this number, we are back in the deliberation room and Jerry and David discover their own humanity/vulnerability and forgive Richard and join the not guilty votes. The foreman calls lunch and the Jury is dismissed. As he is leaving for lunch, Ronaldo approaches Scott to ask him if he wants to join him for a bite to eat. Once Scott realizes that Ronaldo is coming on to him, he is appalled that Ronaldo would assume he is gay and leaves. Joan and Connie re-enter the Jury room with their lunches as both of their phones ring. We find out that they are both in unhappy marriages and they share with each other and eventually the other ladies of the Jury, what they really want in a man. Unhappy in their relationships as well, Maggie and Tracy join Joan and Connie. This song mirrors the number in the musical where Jill and Cheryl were the wives to Jack and Daryl (*Man Wanted*).

The Jurors return from lunch and express their conflicting thoughts about Richard’s guilt as the foreman begins to lose control over the room (*I’m Alive- Reprise*). It is at this point in the story that the push/pull, conflict/tension comes to a head between Aretha, Richard, Sheila and Elisabeth. (*And I Am Telling You*). Richard is left alone on stage as the Jurors return to their deliberation. Richard prays to God for help (*God Save The People*). The Jury begins to feel their own inner struggle stirring them to greater emotion and realization of the potential that Richard’s intentions “for good” are sincere (*Heart And Music*). However, four holdouts are still siding with the foreman and Eliza in finding Richard not guilty (*Razzle Dazzle*) This all comes to a head as Earnest begins to also realize how Richard may have their best interest at heart after all.

In rehearsal, Richard displays his most sensitive and nuanced direction with Earnest and we see the true talent that lies within Richard and how he can create art (*I Was Here*). Aretha has realized that she has lost control of the Jury, as the vote now is at 18 not guilty and 6 guilty. The cast takes their places for the rehearsal of the Act II opening (*Façade*) in which the cast realizes what an artist is and the myriad masks we all wear in society. They begin to go forward more committed to Richard than ever. Following Richard’s compliments on the rehearsal, Elisabeth laments on her feelings for Richard, and her feelings of wanting to be her own person. At the same time, Stephen begins to face his sexual identity. (*I’m Lost*). At the end of the number, Richard and Stephen have a confrontation, as Richard has been physical with Stephen during the previous number. Stephen again denies that he is gay and throws himself into the next number (*They Say It’s Wonderful*) in which he finally realizes his feelings for Ricardo while Richard lets his guard down and shows his true feelings for Elisabeth for the first time.

Back in the deliberation room an argument breaks out regarding Richard’s suspect intentions as relates to the economics involved with the show and the Jury’s overall suspicion of corruption in the American justice system. We are then thrown back into a rehearsal at the theatre where the cast questions the greed of Richard (*Money/All About The Green/American Dream*). Once Midori dramatically reveals that Richard has not taken any money to work on the show, we return to the Jury room where the final four Jurors holding out, besides Eliza and Ariel, change their verdict to not – guilty. Realizing they are the final two holdouts, Eliza and Ariel contemplate the serious nature of playing with Richard’s life (*Dangerous Game*).

The Jury has returned to the courtroom as the judge explains to them that their time to reach a verdict is up. Ariel asks the judge for one final piece of evidence. Throughout the final rehearsal before opening night, Richard is furiously trying to fix the show while Aretha is blocking him at every turn. The cast grows nervous that they will not be able to accomplish all that Richard has asked of them in time until Aretha and Richard come together for the good of the show. Ariel is the second to last hold out and she is slowly building her own internal transformation, which is finally revealed when her double Aretha sings (*Putting It Together*) with Richard. (*Nobody’s Side/Everybody Says Don’t/I Was Here – Reprise/Putting It Together*) The cast prepares for Opening Night as the stage manger and Richard call for the curtain to rise.

The Jury is now down to 23 not guilty and 1 guilty (Eliza). As the action on stage freezes, members of the Jury begin to come to terms with their actions and themselves while Eliza and Richard have a final moment of understanding in which they realize that they will never be together, completely. The rest of the Jury also has final moments of insight and revelation (*Marry Me A Little*). Elisabeth changes her vote to not guilty and Richard is exonerated. As court adjourns there is a celebratory feel. In the middle of the final number we return to the theatre as the Jury becomes the cast and every single person is at their absolute best (*Louder Than Words*).

