

PopStar

By Julian Felice

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PopStar

- 2 -

DEDICATION

To the many students who have shaped me, influenced me and inspired me - there is no doubt that I have learnt as much from you as I hope you have from me.

STORY OF THE PLAY

PopStar takes place during the final stages of a television talent competition. The show's immoral and unscrupulous presenter and executive producer Jools wants a particular contestant to win, and he goes to great lengths to influence the public into thinking his way. However, things do not go according to plan. With the pressure mounting under the harshest of spotlights, an unexpected twist shows that, in the cutthroat television business, few can be trusted. The play explores how the media can manipulate public opinion, an important theme in today's unpredictable world.

AWARDS

Best Original Play, Best Technical Production, Best Supporting Actress (2019 Gibraltar Drama Festival)

PREMIERE PERFORMANCE

This play was first performed at the Ince's Hall Theatre (Gibraltar) on the 22nd March 2019 with the following cast and crew:

JOOLS: Kai Nemes; KATE: Ella Vatvani; ALEX: Miguel Caballero; DANI: Carmen Anderson; JENNY: Grace Peralta; KELLY: Natasha Richardson; WILL: Nikolaj Forrester; MICHELLE: Emma Olivero; NILES: Harry Gonzalez; ENSEMBLE: Nicholas Martinez, Jake Hancock, Julian Reyes, Jeremy Skrzyniarz, Alexandra Felice, Jenaika Ballester; CAMERAMAN: Tyrone Marsh; CONTINUITY ANNOUNCER: Andy Coumbe; DIRECTOR: Julian Felice; STAGE MANAGER: Dulcie Edwards; LIGHTING: Edmund Lawson.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

(3 m, 5 w, 5 flexible, ensemble, doubling possible)

ALEX: (M) Finalist. He is mixed race.

DANI: (W) Finalist. Wears hoodie and glasses.

JENNY: (W) Finalist. Naive and energetic.

KELLY: (W) Finalist. She has a theatre camp energy.

WILL: (M) Finalist. Young actor who likes pop music.

JOOLS: (M) Presenter of *PopStar*.

KATE: (W) Jools' assistant and the show's floor manager.

DIANE: (Flexible) Show's choreographer.

MICHELLE: (W) A backstage reporter.

DOCTOR: (Flexible) Medical doctor.

NILES: (Flexible) Owner of the show's production company.

CONTINUITY ANNOUNCER: (Flexible) Offstage voice, who narrates after commercial breaks.

VOICEOVER: (Flexible) Offstage voice, with an African accent.

ENSEMBLE: Crew members and online commenters.

SETTING

The action takes place in the *PopStar* studio and backstage areas.

SFX

Show's musical jingle
Dance music
Beep

TECHNICAL ELEMENTS

The original production was staged in a dynamic fashion, with a live cameraman streaming the 'live' moments onto a large television screen, allowing the audience to also see what the 'viewers at home' would be seeing. The signs instructing the audience how to react led to moments of audience interaction that made them all feel part of the event.

PROPS

Clipboard
Envelope
Printout
Laptop
Mobile phone

PopStar

(The CURTAIN opens to SFX: The show's musical JINGLE. WILL, ALEX, JENNY, KELLY and DANI are spread out across the stage, perhaps with a SPOTLIGHT on them. Some colored lights flash as the jingle plays, with the show's title sequence shown on a SCREEN.)

JENNY: Hi everyone! I think you should vote for me because I want to be a pop star...

DANI: ...It has always been my dream to sing on stage in front of a huge crowd...

ALEX: ...Since I was a little girl, I have always wanted to be famous...

WILL: ...I love music and I love to sing...

KELLY: ...I have never wanted anything so much...

JENNY: ...I have what it takes to be the next PopStar...

DANI: ...I have worked so hard for this...

ALEX: ...Music is in my blood...

WILL: ...I live and breathe for fame...

KELLY: ...it would mean everything to me to be famous...

JENNY: ...so please...

DANI: ...I'm begging you...

ALEX: ...pick up that phone...

WILL: ...and vote for me...

KELLY: ...please...

ALL FINALISTS: ...make my dream come true!

(SFX: JINGLE starts up again and JOOLS appears. He speaks into a camera and his image appears on a television SCREEN.)

JOOLS: The auditions are over, and our finalists are now ready to perform. Over the next few weeks, they will be showing what they are made of in a bid to win your vote. Once again, you at home will decide who will be this year's PopStar. And remember: to be a star, you have to do whatever it takes!

(SFX: JINGLE plays.)

KATE: (From offstage.) And cut!

(JOOLS visibly relaxes as the CREW appears on stage reapplying makeup, pulling cables, etc. KATE is in charge, carrying a clipboard and giving directions. The FINALISTS stand in neutral as the conversation ensues.)

JOOLS: (Calling out.) Stan! That light on the left is still a bit bright. And this earpiece keeps popping out – and can someone please get me a latte!

KATE: (Approaches JOOLS.) We'll do that once more, Jools. Get a few different angles.

JOOLS: It's just a promo, Kate.

KATE: First promo of the season. Going out at halftime of the Super Bowl tomorrow.

JOOLS: Halftime?

KATE: Yeah.

JOOLS: But that's when everyone goes to the bathroom and grabs a beer, Kate. And not always in that order. No one's going to see it.

KATE: Oh –

JOOLS: Play it just before kickoff. By that time Big Dave will be parked in front of the TV, wearing his Patriots shirt, one hand holding a beer, the other thrust down his pants, a tube of Pringles balanced precariously on his huge belly. Thinks he knows more than the announcer 'cause he's the coach of his building firm's flag football team. Then our promo comes on, he moans about how *PopStar* is back, the wife pushes her head from the kitchen she's been exiled to, remarks something about how she didn't realize it was starting again, and – bingo! – We've got their attention!

KATE: Um –

JOOLS: We've got their attention, Kate!

KATE: (Making a note.) I'll have a word with marketing. We'll just set up the shot now and re-shoot.

JOOLS: Do we have to do it again, Kate?

KATE: But –

JOOLS: Do we have to?

KATE: It's just that –

JOOLS: (*Appealing.*) Really?

KATE: (*After a beat.*) We have to –

JOOLS: (*More insistent.*) Really?

KATE: (*Giving up.*) I guess we could move on...

JOOLS: Great. So what's next?

KATE: Erm... (*Consulting her notes.*) Introduce the finalists.

JOOLS: (*Sighing.*) Who have you gathered up for me this time?

KATE: Erm... (*Reading.*) Jennifer.

JOOLS: Jenny.

KATE: (*Checking her notes.*) It's Jennifer.

JOOLS: She's not a farmer's daughter, Kate. She's a potential PopStar. How many famous Jennifers have you heard of?

KATE: Lopez. Aniston. Garner.

JOOLS: I think you should call her Jenny. It sounds better.

KATE: (*Making a note.*) Jenny...

(JENNY moves forward. Each finalist does the same when JOOLS says their name, then returns to the back when the next one is called.)

JENNY: Hi! I'm Jenny! My favorite singer is Rihanna and I like pop and R&B. I've been singing since the age of three and my dream is to sing all over the world.

JOOLS: She says that now. Just wait until she has to perform at a cheese festival in Wisconsin on a cold November night. Get her to be a bit less Punky Brewster and she'll be fine.

KATE: There's Kelly...

KELLY: Hi! I'm Kelly! I'm a huge fan of Katy Perry and I want to be a PopStar so that I can share my music with everyone!

JOOLS: Theater camp?

(KATE nods.)

End of Freeview

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