

## AUTHOR'S NOTES

*What is your vision for The Fabulous Lipitones? Tell us about your inspirations.*

**JOHN MARCUS:** Growing up in London, Ohio (pop. 6,000), I have held on to a nostalgia for the traditional leanings of the Midwest. My family is Jewish—the only in that town—but I played clarinet in small bands at Methodist church socials and Presbyterian cake walks. As an "other" who became a comedy writer, I cannot help but embrace and consider the darker lining of these traditions. The idea of enjoying while at the same time challenging everything old-fashioned appeals to me. Our vision was to celebrate, and yet shake up, the cultural comfort zone of these characters.

*Talk a bit about the collaboration and how the show came about.*

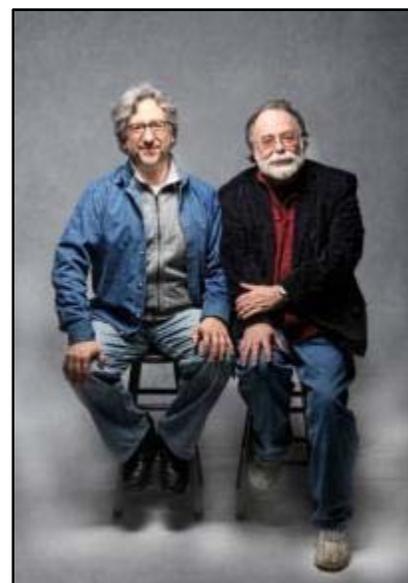
**JM:** Mark and I first worked together twenty years ago when I brought him in to write episodes of *The Cosby Show*. From the get-go, he struck me as a writer's writer, someone capable of hatching the big idea, with the discipline and prodigious gifts to execute it. We've collaborated on and off over the years, but two years ago he began semi-harassing me with phone calls broadly outlining a piece set in the world of competition barbershop, centered around a quartet losing its prized member. I didn't see it then, but the calls kept coming. To get them to stop, I drove to his home in Pound Ridge where we parked ourselves at a picnic table in his backyard and fleshed out what became *The Fabulous Lipitones*. Writing this play with him has been one of the most joyous creative experiences of my career. But I do miss getting those calls.

*What stage of development is the show in now?*

**JM:** Mark and I are absolutely thrilled to be developing our musical at this storied theatre company. We've been working the script for eighteen months now, and the story keeps producing opportunities to deepen its intent. From here, we hope to see the creative goal posts, so to speak. With director Gordon Greenberg and the top-notch cast and crew that will assemble, we hope to sharpen the play and find all the funny. My work in television has indoctrinated me to the World of Rewrite, and the atmosphere at Goodspeed will help us fully realize the play. Who knows where *The Fabulous Lipitones* will travel, but my hope is that, with this pedigree, our musical can eventually be enjoyed all over the country. Especially in places like the town in which I grew up.

*Tell us what you hope to accomplish here at Goodspeed.*

**JM:** My training is to never spoon feed an audience with messages. Our goal is to make an audience laugh at the characters and situations, and that they'll find both to be truthful. I would hope that, leaving the theater, they'll feel something they innately understand—that, even though the road to finding harmony with others can be bumpy and discouraging, it is nearly always worth it. And for me, I want to subtly suggest that deep down we are all "others," who yearn only to belong.



The Fabulous Lipitones authors  
John Marcus and Mark St. Germain