

## ET TU, SHOWBIZ? – Motion Picture

**In Nero's Rome, a broke, would-be impresario drags his shabby troupe to the capital to mount the biggest show of their lives - only to find their would-be star is the Empire's most famous gladiator, their secret weapon is a Christian singer with a target on her back, and the ultimate audience is a jealous emperor who thinks *he's* the main event.**

**ET TU, SHOWBIZ?** is a big, bawdy, modern-feeling ancient-Rome musical comedy about showbiz hunger, artistic ego, and what happens when "bread and circuses" collides with the first flickers of something like conscience. It opens far from the Eternal City - on a dusty farm in Judea - where a teenage theatrical prodigy, **Jo** (Josephus), is already staging scrappy spectacles with improvised whales, wine-skin special effects, and the absolute conviction that he was born for bigger footlights. His early number lays down the engine of the story: Jo's ambition isn't polite or modest - it's messianic. Rome will know his name.

Fifteen years later, reality has taken a hammer to the dream. Jo is now in his late 20s, running a crumbling provincial theatre with a ramshackle troupe: **Fabianus**, a past-his-prime bear of an actor; **Silvia**, an ancient diva with fragments of glamour and a wonderfully skewed compass; and **Gemellus**, a gorgeous, well-meaning himbo who is - crucially - connected to money through his intimidating merchant father. Their shows play to a handful of bored locals (and, memorably, one heckling goat). Jo's talent is real, but the world he's in rewards spectacle over craft. Then Jo sees a lurid poster for **Attalus the Great** - Rome's superstar gladiator - and the penny drops: the Empire doesn't buy "good theatre." It buys a **name**.

When the troupe hurtles toward Rome in desperate, humiliating fashion, the film's second engine ignites: **the Roman entertainment machine**. We meet Attalus at the height of fame - an arena god with an agent, **Paracles**, who sells optimism like perfume. But Attalus is bored of blood and starved for meaning. He doesn't want to kill for applause anymore - he wants to *act*. In the shadows of that same city is **Vibia**, a fierce, funny waitress/singer working both the pricey Palatine and the grimy Subura - carrying a quiet faith that, in Nero's Rome, can turn a tattoo into a death sentence. Her voice can calm a room on the verge of violence; her existence raises the stakes beyond showbiz vanity.

Over it all floats the most dangerous critic imaginable: **Emperor Nero**, preening, petulant, and convinced the world exists to applaud his artistry. Through his sharp, long-suffering secretary **Thrasea**, Nero concocts a grand, empire-wide "talent" spectacle designed to glorify himself - and to remind Rome who truly owns the crowd. That sets a ticking clock for Jo: to build a show big enough to matter, he must assemble a company out of misfits (including the street-musical twins **Castor & Pollux**), find money in a city that eats dreamers, and chase the one kind of performer Rome can't ignore - while staying alive in a culture where entertainment, politics, and punishment are the same stage.

The result is a high-energy, joke-dense musical that plays like a backstage comedy in togas: hustling, casting, pitching, scheming, falling in and out of faith (in art, in love, in survival), and learning that in an empire built on spectacle, the bravest act might be telling the truth in public.