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*Dramatic Publishing*

# SMALL-CAST MUSICAL

"Imagination is more important than knowledge.  
Knowledge is limited. Imagination encircles the world."

"Any man who can drive safely while kissing a pretty girl is simply  
not giving the kiss the attention it deserves."

"I very rarely think in words at all. A thought comes,  
and I may try to express in words afterwards."

# Einstein Is

"Why is it that nobody understands me, yet everybody likes me?"

# a Dummy

"I lived in that solitude which is painful in  
youth, but delicious in the years of maturity."

"Truly novel ideas emerge only in one's youth.  
Later on one becomes more experienced, famous—and foolish."

Book and lyrics by  
Karen Zacarias

"I want to know God's thoughts. The rest are details."

"With fame I become more and more stupid,  
which of course is a very common phenomenon."

Music by  
Deborah Wicks La Puma

"When you are courting a nice girl an hour seems like a second. When  
you sit on a red-hot cinder a second seems like an hour.  
That's relativity."

"All of science is nothing more than refinement of everyday thinking."

"The more success the quantum theory has,  
the sillier it looks."—Albert Einstein

$$E=mc^2$$

"If you can't explain it simply,  
you don't understand it well enough."

## Einstein Is a Dummy

*Musical. Book and lyrics by Karen Zacarias. Music by Deborah Wicks La Puma. Cast: 3m., 1w., 1 either gender.*

As an adult, Albert Einstein changed our view of the universe. But as a boy, he struggled with the same issues any 12-year-old might—keeping up with violin lessons, impressing the girl next door and, oh yeah, comprehending the fundamental relationship of space and time to the speed of light, of course. This uplifting play about a fictional day in young Einstein's life confirms that each of us is both ordinary and special. With an engaging, original score, a healthy dose of imagination and the help of a mysterious cat, *Einstein Is a Dummy* reveals life's atomic possibilities. *Area staging. Optional accompaniment CD available. Approximate running time: 60 minutes. Code: E81.*

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# **Einstein Is a Dummy**

(Small-cast version)

Book and lyrics by  
**KAREN ZACARÍAS**

Music by  
**DEBORAH WICKS LA PUMA**



**Dramatic Publishing Company**

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Music by DEBORAH WICKS LA PUMA

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*Einstein Is a Dummy* (small-cast) was developed at the Kennedy Center New Visions/New Voices Festival 2004, Washington, D.C. The world premiere was held at The Alliance Theatre, Atlanta, Ga., November to December 2005.

Directed by Rosemary Newcott

CAST

Kylie Brown .....	Elsa
David de Vries.....	Herr Schloppnoppdinkerdonn
Jahi Kearse .....	Cat
Derek Manson .....	Albert
Justin Tanner .....	Constantin
Brandon Deyette.....	Understudy for Cat, Constantin, Herr Schloppnoppdinkerdonn, Albert
Kathleen Link.....	Understudy for Elsa

# Einstein Is a Dummy

## CHARACTERS

**ALBERT EINSTEIN:** a clumsy and curious kid. A violin player. A small bow tie.

**The CAT:** a scrawny stray tomcat. Also an ENSEMBLE member.

**HERR SCHLOPPNOPPDINKERDONN:** a very neurotic and uptight violin teacher. Also an ENSEMBLE member.

**CONSTANTIN:** a snotty cello player. An enormous bow tie. Also an ENSEMBLE member.

**ELSA:** a beautiful, sweet viola player. A perfect bow on her head. Also an ENSEMBLE member.



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# Einstein Is a Dummy

## SCENE 1

### (#a. “Light Prelude”)

AT RISE: *A bare stage. We hear a tune on a violin. Suddenly something cracks—the tune abruptly stops. A light appears on ALBERT EINSTEIN. He is a boy, handsome but his hair looks funny and out of shape. An eerie quality. He is holding a violin.*

ALBERT (*startled*). Are we going to start right now? Right now? Really? But I thought ... Oh-oh-all right.

*(ALBERT tries to tuck in his shirt and places his violin under his chin and stands straight. Suddenly, the light moves.)*

ALBERT (*cont'd*). Wait a second!

*(ALBERT goes to the light. The light moves across the room. ALBERT runs to the new spot.)*

ALBERT (*cont'd*). HA, you think you're so fast, but I am FAS—*(The light outruns him again.)* TER. *(Catches up to the light.)* That's it. I promise, by the end of the day, I am going to outrun you.

*(The light takes the dare, moves again.)*

ALBERT *(cont'd)*. All right, there are all these important people out there—So stay, Light. STAY. *(The light tentatively hovers. We hear ALBERT crashing around in the dark, until he jumps into the light.)* AHA! *(But he's in his underwear. ALBERT is surprised and impossibly embarrassed.)* AHHHH! *(Tries to use the violin to cover himself.)* But wait! I get it! This is a dream. Just a dream. I thought I was making a fool of myself ... but I'm just *imagining* that I'm making a fool of myself ... *(His pants flop back on-stage, possibly hitting him by surprise. He absentmindedly puts them back on.)* although my heart is thumping and I'm sweating for real. Nothing is quite what it seems and yet everything is real in its own strange way ...

### **(#1: “Planetary Opening”)**

*(We see a light—could be ALBERT holding a flashlight.)*

ALBERT *(cont'd)*. Like this light ...

ENSEMBLE.

LIGHT,

ALBERT. Is it really a light inside my head that illuminates my dreams?

ENSEMBLE.

A LIGHT,

ALBERT. Is it like a special sun?

ENSEMBLE.

A LIGHT,

ALBERT. We call our closest light the sun ... But if the light moves far away like this—

ENSEMBLE.

A LIGHT FAR AWAY!

ALBERT. Does our sun just become another star? And is that light we see really a star or something else? Look closer. Closer. Closer!

ALL.

DREAM AS WIDE,  
AS WIDE AS YOU CAN!

*(The Universe opens. We see many stars. Could be ENSEMBLE using small flashlights.)*

ENSEMBLE.

TEN THOUSAND LIGHT YEARS,  
NINE THOUSAND LIGHT YEARS,  
EIGHT THOUSAND LIGHT YEARS,  
SEVEN THOUSAND LIGHT YEARS,

ALBERT.

CLOSER,  
CLOSER,

SIX THOUSAND LIGHT YEARS,  
FIVE THOUSAND LIGHT YEARS,  
FOUR THOUSAND LIGHT YEARS,  
THREE THOUSAND LIGHT YEARS,

MOVING  
CLOSER.

ALBERT.

QUESTIONS FILL THE EVENING SKY,

ENSEMBLE.

TWO THOUSAND LIGHT YEARS,

ALBERT.

NOTHING'S WHAT IT SEEMS TO BE,  
WHY?

ENSEMBLE.

ONE THOUSAND LIGHT YEARS.

OUR EYES CAN ONLY SEE SO MUCH,  
OUR HANDS HELD BACK BY WHAT THEY TOUCH.  
IMAGINATION GOES EVERYWHERE,  
FROM MOON AND SUNS,  
PASS THE STRATOSPHERE,

ALBERT.

CLOSE YOUR EYES  
AND TRAVEL  
CLOSER.

ENSEMBLE.

NINE HUNDRED,  
EIGHT HUNDRED,  
SEVEN HUNDRED,  
SIX HUNDRED,  
FIVE HUNDRED,  
FOUR HUNDRED,  
THREE HUNDRED,  
TWO HUNDRED,

ALBERT.

RIDE THE LIGHT  
WHILE MOVING  
CLOSER.

ALL.

PLUTO AND NEPTUNE  
AND URANUS, SATURN AND  
JUPITER, ASTEROIDS,  
MARS AND EARTH,

*(The light illuminates a scraggly stray CAT.)*

CAT.

CLOSER.

## SCENE 2

*(ALBERT is very determinedly building a house of cards. He hums a little. CAT enters and sits next to him. CAT meows.)*

ALBERT. Cat, what are you doing here again?

*(CAT meows.)*

ALBERT *(cont'd)*. You have to go. I just can't let stray cats stay. Especially today.

*(CAT meows.)*

ALBERT *(cont'd)*. Why? Because, you see Cat, today may seem like any other day, but if you look closely it's not. My nails are longer, my pants are shorter, the sun sets at a different time. And tonight, tonight I am going to do something so fantastic and wonderful that no one will ever say again "Albert, you are so slow—Albert, stop your daydreaming—Einstein, you are such a dummy." After tonight, that mean boy Constantin will never make fun of me again and Elsa, *(Sigh.)* sweet perfect Elsa, will know I am the best boy in the world ... no the Universe.

*(CAT purrs. ALBERT hums some notes and carefully sets a card. Tension.)*

ALBERT (*cont'd*). You see, tonight is the Big Illustriously Important Enormous Grand Fancy Schmancy Recital. I'm almost done inventing a song. It's called "E's Enigma". You see, Cat, in my mind each card represents a musical phrase. The jack of spades sounds like this, (*Hums phrase to "Molecular Mass."*) and I think the eight of clubs is an eighth note that repeats. (*Makes a repetitive percussive sound.*) But the queen of hearts ... the queen of hearts ... I don't know ... maybe she sounds like this:

*(ALBERT vocalizes a high falsetto phrase—this should be funny. CAT hisses in distaste and offers instead a jazzy well-pitched meow.)*

ALBERT (*cont'd*). Maybe. (*Hand shakes as he gingerly puts another card in place.*) What I have to do is finish this song, then convince Herr Schloppnoppdinkerdonn to let Elsa, Constantin and me play "E's Enigma" at the recital. You see, Cat, this song will change everything. It will set off a reaction like no other.

*(Dream light on ALBERT. Thunderous applause. He waves, he bows. HERR SCHLOPPNOPPDINKERDONN and CONSTANTIN run in to congratulate him, giving him high-fives. ELSA comes in last, hands him a flower and begins to slowly go to kiss his cheek. Then, they suddenly ALL stop except for CAT.)*

### **(#1a: "Catalyst")**

CAT. Cat-a-lyst: An action between two or more forces initiated by an agent that is not permanently affected by the reaction.

*(The dream disappears.)*

ALBERT. I knew you could talk! *(Trips over CAT and falls onto his house of cards, which flattens.)* Oh, no. My song! And I was almost finished. Cat, why do you keep showing up and making a mess? Don't you have somewhere else to be?

CAT. Not really.

ALBERT. Look what you did ... "E's Enigma." It's totally destroyed! And now that you can talk, what do have to say about that?

CAT. Matter is never created or destroyed. At least that's what everyone says ... *(Begins playing with the cards absentmindedly.)*

ALBERT. But ... but ... !

CAT. Albert, what's the matter?

ALBERT. What's the matter?! The MATTER CHANGED!

CAT. So?

ALBERT. So, look at this! *(Picking up the cards.)* What if matter can turn into something else? I mean, things disappear, right? A match burns away. A leaf decays.

CAT. A song can fall flat.

ALBERT. Right! What if matter is not destroyed, it just has a different shape?

CAT. Oh, that's different.

ALBERT. Wait! I don't want to be different. I am trying to be normal! Normal and yet, really, really popular! Cat, you need to go right now because I need to focus! I cannot make one mistake at this recital! Focus! Focus! Focus! *(Sees a small package.)* Oh—what's this?

CAT *(chanting)*. Open it! Open it! Open it!

ALBERT. Should I?



CAT. Yes! It's for you! It could be amazing.

ALBERT. It could be stupid.

CAT. It could be valuable.

ALBERT. It could be dangerous.

CAT. It could be sparkly and shiny and cat nippy.

ALBERT. Or rotten, slimy and gross!

ALBERT & CAT (*with awe*). Oooohhh.

CAT. So, are you going to open it?

ALBERT. I don't know.

CAT. But aren't you curious?

ALBERT. Of course I am, aren't you?

CAT. Hello, I'm a cat!

ALBERT (*opens it*). Cat! Look! It's what I've always wanted!

CAT. That's incredible. It's wonderful. It's the best. WHAT IS IT?!

ALBERT. I DON'T KNOW! It looks like a watch but ... It has an N and an S and E and a W.

CAT. Oh, we've heard about these things before. Remember?

ALBERT. It's a compass! Oh look, no matter which way I turn, the arrow points North. North is that way! Like magic!

CAT. Like science.

ALBERT. This is the best present in the world. I wonder who it's from. Oh, a note from Mama.

CAT (*wistfully*). Mama ...

MAMA (*V.O.*). Dear Albert, I know that Father's business hasn't been so good lately, but tonight is a very special night and I wanted you to have a very special gift. Enjoy it, my dear—BUT (*Sudden escalating tone of stress.*) remember: you have to be at Herr Schloppnoppdinkerdonn's studio at three, on the dot! So DO NOT be late. Use this compass so you won't get lost. Go north on Struedel Street, then west on South Strasse Street. Now

DO NOT forget your violin OR your jacket. It's been pressed and cleaned so DO NOT wrinkle it! And when you get to rehearsal, just sit and listen and ... whatever you do ... DO NOT ask: "why."

ALBERT. Why?

MAMA (*V.O.*). Oy!! Because I said so. Listen, everybody—and I mean everybody—me, your papa, Moishe, Sam, Jacob, the Wagners, the Schwartzes, the Epsteins, the Hertz—*s*—and their cousin Selma—your baby sister Maya and your great aunt Hilda will be at the recital to hear you play ... SO, whatever you do, Albert, DON'T MESS UP. Lots of love, (*Kiss sound.*) Mama.

*(The clock strikes three.)*

ALBERT. What? It's 3:00 already? I'm supposed to be there not here. How can time sometimes go so fast and other times go so slow?!

CAT. Tell me about it! Sometimes a minute goes like lightning and other times, like not. Maybe it's because ...

ALBERT. Because ... Stop! Hush cat! Not now! (*Running around the room, he picks up some cards, starts to leave, then runs back for the compass. He starts to leave again, remembers his jacket, but he can't carry it, so he puts everything down and puts on the jacket and then picks everything up and just as he is about to exit the room, he stops. Frantic.*) I know I'm forgetting something. But what?

### **(#1b: "To Rehearsal")**

*(The light reveals ALBERT's violin.)*

ALBERT (*cont'd*). Oh, I know!

*(CAT gives him the violin. ALBERT frantically runs out of the room.)*

ALBERT (*cont'd*). Goodbye, Cat!