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L A R G E - C A S T M U S I C A L

# Einstein Is a Dummy



Book and lyrics by  
Karen Zacarías.

Music by  
Deborah Wicks La Puma.

# Einstein Is a Dummy

"Young Einstein's geeky streak is reason to rock ... *Einstein* abounds with the energy of its subject matter ... The verdict: sheer energy, musicalized."

—*The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*

"I loved the production and was very impressed by how well it captured both the coming-of-age of a 'different' teenager AND the unique scientific insights that led to Einstein's remarkable year of publications ... It was the most creative approach to communicating physics that I've ever seen."

—*Matthew S. Grober, associate professor of biology, Georgia State University*

*Musical. Book and lyrics by Karen Zacarias. Music by Deborah Wicks La Puma. Cast: 3m., 5w., 4 either gender. May be expanded to up to 100 each of m., w., either. 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: 90 minutes. Code: E80.*

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# Einstein Is a Dummy

(Large-cast version)

Book and lyrics by  
KAREN ZACARÍAS

Music by  
DEBORAH WICKS LA PUMA



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Music by DEBORAH WICKS LA PUMA

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**(EINSTEIN IS A DUMMY [LARGE-CAST])**

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*Einstein Is a Dummy* (large-cast) was developed at New Visions/New Voices Festival 2004, The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Washington, D.C. World Premiered at The Alliance Theatre, Atlanta, Ga., November 2005 and was directed by Rosemary Newcott. Youth Cast Premiere, March 2011, Norris Center for the Performing Arts in Rolling Hills Estates, Calif.

Directed by Corey Jones

Produced by Debbie Martinez

Max Havas .....	Albert
Luke Hardy .....	Cat
Brianna Bowers.....	Mama
Claire Easton.....	Maja
Caitlyn Barresi .....	Elsa
Joey Bacon.....	Constantin
Sabine Slome .....	Greta
Julia Eve La Puma .....	Helga
Luke Pilapil.....	Herr Schloppnoppdinkerdonn

This production also included: Naya Allen (Molecule 2), Christina Amiridis, Alyssa Bowers, Leah Bozajian (Molecule 3), Hayden Butler, Monica Chernoff (Woman), Liese Cooper (Girl), Greta Cox, Alex Hattori, Blake Pilger (Man), Cecilia La Puma, Juliette Mandal, Kaylen Ng, Brooke Vanderdonk (Molecule 1), Ridge Winokur, Natalia Womack and Christopher Youssef (Boy).

# Einstein Is a Dummy

## CHARACTERS

*(Cast: 3m., 5w., 1 either gender. May be expanded to up to 100 each of m., w., either. Ensemble plays relatives, particles, planets and other physical forces.)*

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

A small bow tie.

**The CAT:** a scrawny stray cat.

**MAMA:** Albert's mother (also doubles as ensemble).

**MAJA:** Albert's younger sister (also doubles as ensemble).

**HERR SCHLOPPNOPPDINKERDONN:** a very neurotic and uptight music teacher.

**CONSTANTIN:** a snotty cello player. An enormous bow tie.

**HELGA:** a viola player. Matching bows with her twin sister Greta.

**GRETA:** a viola player. Matching bows with her twin sister Helga.

**ELSA:** a beautiful sweet violin player. A perfect bow on her head.

**PSYCHOANALYST:** a German psychoanalyst.

**INK BLOT:** a paper navel gazer.

**CROWD:** in interesting hats. Albert's family/audience.

**NEIGHBOR #1**

**NEIGHBOR #2**

**NEIGHBOR #3**

**WOMAN:** with candle.

**GIRL:** reading.

**BOY:** on bike.

**MAN:** with watch.

**DEBONAIR AL**

## SETTING

Inside Albert Einstein's mind; the outer rim of the solar system;  
Munich, Germany, circa 1890.



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# Einstein Is a Dummy

## ACT I

### 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. Suddenly a CROWD of people in interesting hats are looking at him also in shock.)*

ALBERT *(cont'd)*. AHFFF!

CROWD. AHFFF!

ALBERT *(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 ... in front of people but I'm just imagining that I'm making a fool of myself ... in front of people. *(His pants flop back onstage, possibly hitting him by surprise. He absentmindedly puts them back on.)* Although my heart is thumping and I'm sweating for real. Just like that group of hat-wearing—

*(CROWD disappears.)*

ALBERT *(cont'd)*. Hey, wasn't there a group of people in funny hats here just a minute ago? 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 ...

ENSEMBLE.

A LIGHT

ALBERT. But if the light moves far away like this—

ENSEMBLE.

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!

ENSEMBLE.

DREAM AS FAR AND 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,  
SIX THOUSAND LIGHT YEARS,  
FIVE THOUSAND LIGHT YEARS,  
FOUR THOUSAND LIGHT YEARS,  
THREE THOUSAND LIGHT YEARS,

ALBERT.

CLOSER,  
CLOSER,  
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.  
BUT 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,

ALBERT.

CLOSER.

FEMALE ENSEMBLE.

MUNICH, GERMANY.

ALL.

EIGHTEEN EIGHTY-SIX.

WOMAN (*with candle*).

A WOMAN BURNS A CANDLE ...

GIRL (*reading*).

A YOUNG GIRL READING ...

BOY (*on bike*).

A BOY SPEEDING BY ON HIS BRAND NEW BICYCLE ...

MAN (*with watch*).

A MAN WITH A CANE CHECKING HIS WATCH ...

*(The four ENSEMBLE members repeat their lines four times, overlapping and accelerating. Light illuminates a scraggly stray CAT. CAT joins in the singing.)*

CAT.

A CAT,

A CAT ...

ALBERT.

ALL JOINING IN THE  
COSMIC ENERGY OF LIFE IN THE  
WORLD!

*(The song becomes suddenly fast. The entire ENSEMBLE joins.)*

ENSEMBLE (*continues under*).

DO DO DO ...

ALBERT.

ALL THESE PEOPLE MOVING LIKE ... WHAT?  
ALL THESE PEOPLE MOVING LIKE ... WHAT?  
MOVING LIKE STREAMS,  
LIKE WAVES,  
LIKE LIGHT!  
EVERYTHING MOVING LIKE

ALL.

LIGHT!

## 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—

(*NEIGHBORS 1, 2 and 3 appear in spotlight.*)

NEIGHBOR #1. Albert, you are so slow—

NEIGHBOR #2. Albert, stop your daydreaming—

NEIGHBOR #3. Einstein, you are such a dummy.

ALBERT. After tonight, that mean boy Constantin and his adoring twins 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. Shh ... we have to be very quiet and—

*(MAMA and MAJA knock loudly on the door and enter.)*

MAMA. ALBERT! Remember your recital! You must go to practice at 3 p.m.

ALBERT. Yes, Mama.

MAMA. You need to focus. Focus.

MAJA. Focus.



CAT. Meow.

MAMA. Focus on getting ready! Come Maja.

*(MAMA and MAJA exit. ALBERT turns back to the house of cards, his hand shaking as he gingerly puts another card in place.)*

ALBERT. What I have to do is finish this song, then convince Herr Schloppnoppdinkerdonn to let me, Constantin, Helga, Greta and *(Sigh.)* Elsa 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 by CROWD. ALBERT waves, he bows. HERR and CONSTANTIN run in to congratulate him, giving him high-fives. HELGA and GRETA spin him around in celebration. 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! Focus 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.

(*Enter MAMA and MAJA.*)

MAMA. It's from me, your beloved mama.

CAT (*wistfully*). Mama ...

MAJA. Mama! Why does Albert get a present and not me?

MAMA. You'll see. 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 ...

ALBERT. But?

MAJA. But?

CAT. But what?

MAMA (*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?

MAJA. Mama, Albert asked why!

MAMA. Oy! Because I said so.

CAT. Say what?