

Isabella

Musical based freely on the Italian folktale “Katherina the Wise”

In Italian Folktales by Italo Calvino

Book, Lyrics, and Music by Allen Winold

Edited and produced by Bettina Hoar

Personnel Requirements

Solo Singers

Daughter Isabella (soprano); Father: Antonio, (baritone); Prince: Carlo, (tenor)

Secondary Roles

Two merchants, friends of Antonio: Luigi, Federico -- (tenor, bass)

Two comrades of Prince Carlo: Mario, Francesco -- (baritone, bass)

Child in children’s chorus: Fabiola (soprano)

King (speaking role)

Princess Prudence of England (appears briefly only in Wedding Scene)

Naples (young child who appears briefly in Wedding scene with one line)

Adult Chorus (minimum of 4) (soprano, alto, tenor, bass)

Children’s Chorus (minimum of 4 girls and/or boys) (soprano, alto)

Dancers (minimum of 2 solo dancers) other dancers, if available

Orchestra (piano, violin, viola, cello, double bass (same instrumentation used by Schubert in his “Trout” quartet). Other instruments may be substituted or added if desired for special effects.

Opening Music

1. WELCOME SONG: Sung by the Chorus before the curtain.

Audio: IsabC1WelcomeSong.mscz

**Welcome to the theater.
How could anything be greater?
Than acting, singing and dance,
Tragedy, Comedy, and Romance**

**Everyone's getting ready
Everything's getting heady**

**Players are tuning,
(Tuning pitches G D A E ___ played on violin)
Actors are mooning,
Oh, Oh, Oh, ___
Singers are crooning
La La La La La La La _____ (C E G C'G E C ___)
Clowns are buffooning
Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha _____ (C' B A G F E D C)
Dancers are stretching, (with dancers stretching motions)
Workers are fetching. (workers bring cartons)
Critics are moping, (show critic writing pad and
Backers are hoping
Everyone's ready to go**

**(6/8 slower) Our story begins many years ago
In a land far away
Our characters you will soon get to know
In a very special way**

(The following lines are to be spoken by three chorus members.)

**The merchant Antonio is wealthy
He is kind, hard working, and healthy
His daughter Isabella is smart
She is lovely and has a big heart
The prince, Don Carlo, is vain
He is handsome, but also a pain
(The following lines are sung by complete chorus)
Now we're ready to go
It's almost time for the show
But first I have something to say
To ward off any dismay
Please turn off all your
Electrical devices.
And put away any
Forbidden spices**

*Now we are ready to go
Now it is time for the show.
We hope you have a wonderful night
We hope that everything turns out right.*

*(2/2 Slow) Welcome to the theater
We will see you later.*

Act One

Scene One: The Home of Isabella and Antonio

As curtain opens Antonio is pacing back and forth, nodding his head and wringing his hands.

Knock on door; Luigi and Federico enter:

Antonio: My dear friends, thank you for coming. I need your advice

Luigi, Federico together: What's wrong?

Antonio: My poor daughter, Isabella, is still lamenting the death of her mother. This has gone on for weeks now and I don't know what to do.

Federico: The poor child.

Luigi: How can we help?

Antonio: Let me tell you the whole story

2. ISABELLA SONG (sung by Antonio, Luigi, and Federico)

Audio: IsabD2IsabellaSong.mscz

Isabella, she's unhappy, she just sits there, and she sighs.

Isabella always tries hard to conceal tears in her eyes

Since her poor mother died

I have lovingly tried

But she keeps right on moaning and now I don't know what do, so I say

Isabella needs a fella, (Luigi) or a hobby, (Federico) or a job

***(All three singers) Isabella needs to take heart
Needs a free start, and a chance to begin life again,
And a chance to begin life again.***

(Luigi) Look. Watch her pacing back and forth in her room.

(Federico) Listen to her and you'll see what I mean.

3. MAMA (Sung by Isabella)

Audio: IsabE3MamaMama.mscz

***Mama, Mama, I love you so.
Mama, Mama, why did you go?
Help me, lead me,
Oh, I need thee.***

(spoken)

Luigi: Now we know what you mean. She sounds so sad.

Federico: Yes, but she still has her beautiful voice.

Luigi: And she's so intelligent

Antonio: Wait. I know what she can do.

Luigi & Federico: What?

Antonio: Music education

Luigi & Federico: What's music education

Antonio: Let me tell you

4. MUSIC EDUCATION (sung by Antonio, Luigi, and Federico)

Audio: IsabF4MusicEducaiton.mscz

(Antonio)

***What is that wondrous thing?
That makes us want to sing?
Even though we cannot sing in tune?
Well, it must be
Music Education, Music Education, Music Education***

(Federico and Luigi)

***What makes us take a chance?
Jump up and dare to dance?
Even though we look like a buffoon?
Well, it must be
Music Education, Music Education, Music Education***

(Antonio) Forget psychology, (Luigi) biology, (Federico) theology, (all) statistics

(Luigi) Geography, (Federico) cartography, (Antonio) photography, (Luigi) (all) linguistics

(All) They can't hold a candle

To Bach, Brahms, or Handel,

(Antonio) They just can't take it,

(Luigi and Federico) They just fake it,

*(All) So lets stick with what can make it,
Shake and bake it*

(Antonio) Let's teach the world to sing

(Federico) Let's teach them everything

(Luigi) From classical to rock and roll

(All) And we'll do it with

Music Education, Music Education, Music Education

(All) Let's teach them note and chord,

And be sure they're never bored

Even if they sing the whole day long

Give them Music Education, Music Education, Music Education

Music Education, Music Education, Music Education

YEAH!

Act One: Scene Two: Isabella's School for Music education

Children are milling around talking and laughing.

One of the children: I don't see why we have to study so hard.
Who cares if you know math or music or anything.

Other Children: Yeah! That's right! Who cares what you know?

Fabiola: OK everybody, settle down and listen to me.

5. DUMB SONG (sung by Fabiola)

Audio: IsabG5DumbSong.mscz

*You don't have to be dumb,
You don't have to be a fool
So don't be a crumb
And think you're being cool
You don't have to be bad
You don't have to play the fool
What we learn now in school
Could really help us some day
To live a good life
To live a good life*

Isabella enters

Children: Good Morning Isabella.

Isabella: Good morning everyone. Yesterday you had some problems singing and hearing half steps and whole steps, so today we are going to learn two songs that should help you learn to hear them.

Children: moaning and sighing and saying at different times: Oh that sounds hard, ugh, oh no, etc.

Isabella: OK, that's enough. You'll see! It won't be hard at all. You have the music to this song – so, I'll start and you follow.

6. HALF WHOLE RAG

Audio: IsabH6HalfWholeRag.mscx

Half step

(First time sung by Isabella, second time by all the girls.)

*Half step, I love you
I want lots of you
Half step you make me so happy
Half step, you're sensual
You're quite essential
In every melody
Half step, I pray you
Please let me play you
Half steps what say you?
Do I dismay you?
Did I betray you?*

Orchestra Continues “Half Step Rag” Girls and Isabella dance.

Whole Step

(First time sung by Isabella, second time by all the students)
Whole step, a big whole step, you're a whole step indeed
Whole step, a big whole step, you are just what we need!
Whole step, you're the joy of my life,.
You'll lead us to the top. You'll never, ever stop
And we'll stay with you, and we'll play with you
And we'll learn from you, never turn from you
In a wonderful, glorious world
We'll learn how to play with you. We'll learn what to say with you
Stay with you, each day with you.

Orchestra continues "Whole Steps". Girls and Isabella dance.

Isabella: Ok now let's see if you can hear these. Chiara will play some half steps and whole steps and I'll call on you to tell me what you hear

(Isabella calls on different students by name to tell what intervals they hear. Most of them get it right and she praises them, when they don't she sings the beginning of the correct tune, and then gives them another chance. She is always sweet and encouraging)

Prince Carlo, Mario and Francesco enter as this little quiz is going on.

Isabella: And who might you be, to burst in here like this while we are having our music education lesson.

7. WE'RE FOR PRINCE CARLO **(Sung by Prince Carlo, Mario and Francesco.)**

Audio: IsabH6PrinceCarlo.mscx

The instrumental parts may be played by violin, viola, and cello as given in the score list or by three trumpets as given in the supplemental score list.

Carlo: I am Prince Carlo. I've got the right stuff

Mario and Francesco: He is Prince Carlo. He's smart and he's tough.

Carlo: I am Prince Carlo; I'll show you the way

Mario and Francesco: He is Prince Carlo; He'll brighten your day

Carlo: And I never will stop,

Till I get to the top,

Every thing will be fine

*And the world will be mine
And I'll marry a princess and
Live till I'm Ninety and
That will be wonderful*

Mario and Francesco: *That will be wonderful*

Carlo, Mario and Francesco: *That will be wonderful
That will be wonderful*

Isabella: (spoken) OK Prince Carlo, that's what you're going to do. But, for now, show me what you can do. Can you tell a half step from a whole step?

Carlo: (worried) Why, uh, uh, (defiant) Of course I can!!

(She plays a half step. He says "that's a whole step and she slaps him hard. He runs out of the room shouting , "How dare you speak that way and slap a royal prince? You'll be sorry, mark my words"

Act One: Scene Three: Prince Carlo's Room in the Royal Castle

(Carlo is furiously pacing back and forth alone.)

Carlo: Who does this Isabella think she is? Does she think she can slap a royal prince? I'll get even with her. (*Paces back and forth*)

Mario and Francesco enter.

Carlo: Comrades, thank you for coming. I think I know what to do to punish Isabella for the way she treated me. I'm going to marry her and get her to apologize.

Mario and Francesco (alternating lines): **M:** Excellent! **F:** Great Idea. **M:** Leave it to the prince to solve this problem. **F:** It's a great way to punish Isabella. **M:** Yeah, especially after the horrible thing she did to Don Carlo.

King (enters while Carlo is speaking) What am I hearing, Carlo? Are you planning to marry a commoner? --- a music teacher?

Carlo: Yes father, it's the only way we can maintain the honor of the royal family. I will marry her and then tell her that she must apologize for the slap she gave me. If not, I shall have her put in the dungeon until she comes to her senses.

King: Ah ha! My son now you are behaving like a true nobleman! I will send the Chancellor to speak to the merchant, Antonio and tell him that his daughter must marry my son.

Act One: Scene Four: The Home of Isabella and Antonio

Antonio: Dearest Isabella, I have some shocking news. The King's Chancellor has just told me that you, my beloved daughter, will have to marry the King's son, Prince Carlo. If you refuse, I will lose my business and you will lose your beloved music school. What can we do?

Isabella: Dear Father, I can understand your concern. But I think this might work out somehow. I know that Prince Carlo is a horribly vain person and I know he does not seem like a good choice for a husband. But what you may not know is that my beloved mother told me shortly before her death that she thought that Prince Carlo, despite his vanity and immaturity, might still be an ideal person for me to marry. She thought that behind his braggadocio manner there was a genuinely kind, helpful, and loving heart, who might marry a commoner.

Antonio: Dear Isabella. If your mother felt that way and if you feel that way then who am I to disagree with the two women I love most in this whole world. I will tell the Chancellor to tell the King that you will marry Prince Carlo.

Act One: Scene Five: Beautiful Chapel in the Royal Castle (Performed on full stage)

It is the Wedding of Isabella and Carlo: The chorus sings the bridal chorus,

8. Hail the Bride and Groom

(Based freely on elements from Wagner's Wedding March from Lohengrin).

(Performed by full chorus and orchestra)

Audio: J8HailBrideGroom.mscz

**Hail the Bride and Groom
In this lovely room
They will pledge eternal love
Help will come to them from above
Their two hearts will blend
Their love will never end
So Hail The Bride and Groom
Hail the Bride and Groom**

Priest: (spoken) Dearly Beloved we are gathered here together to celebrate the marriage of Prince Carlo and the Isabella... (curtains close as the ceremony begins).

Act One: Scene Six: Prince Carlo's Bedroom

Isabella: Well, here we are.

Carlo: Yes, here we are and now you must apologize for the slap you gave me.

Isabella: Apologize? Never!

Carlo: If you don't, I will put you in the dungeon.

Isabella: Never, never, never!!

Carlo: OK Guards! Come and put this disloyal woman in the dungeon.

Act One: Scene Seven: The Dungeon in the Royal Castle

(If possible, use the orchestra pit as the dungeon. This could also lead to some amusing informal exchanges between Isabella and orchestra members if desired.) The spotlight captures Isabella alone

Isabella: What have I done? Will I have to spend my whole life in this dungeon? What shall I do? ... what shall I do??

ACT TWO

Act Two, Scene One: Prince Carlo's Bedroom Isabella is in the dungeon below

Prince Carlo: Ok, Isabella. Will you apologize for slapping me?

Isabella: Never

Prince Carlo: Ok! I'm going to travel to Naples and have a wonderful time dancing but you will not participate unless you apologize for what you did too me. If you do not apologize, you will stay forever in the dungeon! (He leaves by boat to Naples.)

9. PAPA, PAPA, Isabella sings variant of the Mama, Mama song.

Audio: IsabK9PapaPapa.mscx

Papa, Papa, I love you true

Papa, Papa, What should I do?

Help me! Guide me

Please don't chide me!

(Just as she finishes the song, Antonio, Francesco and Luigi come into the dungeon.)

Antonio: Dear Isabella, you can stop worrying. We have built a tunnel from our house to this dungeon. However, don't you think it would be a good idea to apologize to Prince Carlo so you can leave this dungeon and have a happy life.

Isabella: Never! Never! Please, just make it possible for me to come out whenever I need to.

Antonio: All right, I will do that.

Act Two, Scene Two: Naples

Items below that are marked in bold and underlined in italics should be followed closely. These items are important for the end of the musical.

Scene 2: Isabella travels by boat to Naples. Local dancers and singers are performing in the square. Isabella appears in disguise, with black hair and some facial disguise and wearing a beautiful cloak.

Isabella flirts with the unsuspecting prince, who falls for her without realizing who she is. People are milling around talking with each other. At first Carlo just dances alone rather clumsily around Isabella, while he sings to her. Then he begins dancing with her while other dancers stop and watch them

10. MINUET

Audio: Isabl10Minuet.mus

Prince Carlo

*Madame, are you free,
Madame, hear my plea,
Take a chance,
And let me dance
A minuet with thee*

Isabella

*Sir, I'll tell you true
What I'll never do,
Is take a chance
And try to dance
A minuet with you*

Prince Carlo (grabs hold of Isabella and they dance)

*Madame, I insist,
This should not be missed
Feel the schmaltz
Of this sweet waltz
And celebrate our tryst*

Prince Carlo and Isabella dance. The others watch and then they join in to dance all together.

Prince Carlo: (spoken) Dancing with you was wonderful. Now, please come to my room and let us get to know each other even better.

Isabella: (spoken) Sir, who do you think you are.

Prince Carlo: (spoken) uh I am Prince -- uh -- that is I am principally known as Carlo the conqueror, but you can just call me Carlo. And also I have some lovely wine we can share.

Isabella: Yes, that sounds wonderful...

They leave together (curtain closes).

Act 2: Scene 3: one year later

(Isabella is in her dungeon.)

Prince Carlo: So, are you still enjoying your dungeon or will you finally apologize for slapping me?

Isabella: Never, never, never!

Prince Carlo: Ok, tomorrow night I am going to Apulia to have a wonderful time at a garden party. Enjoy your (sarcastically) garden.

Prince Carlo takes his boat to Apulia, and Isabella escapes the dungeon again and follows him by boat to Apulia.

Act 2: Scene 4: Apulia

Isabella appears in disguise, with *red hair*, and *large hat with a feather in it*. She flirts with Carlo who again remarks that she reminds of someone else.

Carlo grabs her and starts to dance with her. It first she resists, but finally she dances with him.

11. TARENTELLA: danced by Isabella and Carlo (and other couples)

Audio:IsabM11Tarentella.mus

*Madam, I'm telling you
It would be swell if you
Dance Tarentella with me
It won't be frightful,
Only delightful,
Try it tonight and you'll see*

Prince Carlo: (spoken) Dancing with you was wonderful. Now, please come to my room and let us get to know each other even better.

Isabella: (spoken) Sir, who do you think you are.

Prince Carlo: (spoken) uh I am Prince uh that is I am principally known as Carlo the conqueror, but you can just call me Carlo. And also I have some lovely wine we can share.

Isabella: Well, actually that sounds lovely....

They leave together (curtain closes).

Act 2: Scene 5 One Year Later

Carlo (in his bedroom) and Isabella (in the dungeon)

Prince Carlo: So, are you still enjoying your dungeon? Or will you finally apologize for slapping me?

Isabella: Never, never, never!

Prince Carlo: Ok, Tomorrow night I am going to a ball in Venice to waltz the night away. Enjoy your (sarcastically) “ballroom”.

Prince Carlo takes his boat to Venice, and Isabella escapes the dungeon again and follows him by boat to Venice.

Act 2: Scene 6: Venice

Isabella appears in disguise again, wearing a beautiful ballroom costume, with *blond hair*, facial disguise and a *beautiful necklace around her neck*.

She flirts with Carlo who again remarks that she reminds of someone else.

12. WALTZ

Danced by Isabella and Carlo. Based on Isabella Song (3)

Audio: IsabN12Waltz.msxc

There are no lyrics to this Waltz. Instead the actions of Isabella and Carlo during the dance show how they are first hesitant, then friendly, and finally dancing with rapture. Other couples join in the waltz as it comes to a stirring conclusion

Prince Carlo: (spoken) Dancing the waltz with you was wonderful. Now, please come to my room and let us get to know each other even better.

Isabella: (spoken) Sir, who do you think you are.

Prince Carlo: (spoken) I am Prince. Uh, that is I am principally known as Carlo the conqueror, but you can just call me Carlo. And also I have some lovely wine we can share.

Isabella: Well, I would like some wine (wink).

They leave together.

Act 2: Scene 7: One year later

In the Dungeon

Prince Carlo: So, are you still enjoying your dungeon or will you finally apologize for slapping me?

Isabella: Never, never, never!

Prince Carlo: “Ok, then tomorrow I am going to marry Princess Prudence of England. “

Isabella: (with mock horror) What? Oh no! That cannot be!

Prince: “Oh yes, it can.”

Act 2: Scene 8: Same Chapel as in First Act.

Entire cast is assembled in the chapel. If possible, selected members of the audience may come on stage and sit in the pews. Prince Carlo enters and stands with Mario and Francesco. Princess Prudence of England walks down the aisle.

13. Wedding Processional

Audio: IsabO13Processional.mscx

Freely based on variations of musical gestures in the Wagner Wedding March

Sung by the whole cast.

**Hail to the Bride. Bursting with pride
She has traveled miles. She how she smiles
Look at the groom. He is full of gloom.
Is she the one? What has he done?**

As song ends, the priest comes forward.

Priest: (spoken) Dearly Beloved we are gathered here together to celebrate the marriage of Prince Carlo and the Princess Prudence of England. Is there anyone here who objects to this marriage?

Isabella enters into the chapel wearing the *cloak*, the *large hat* and the *necklace* she wore for the Minuet, Tarentella, and Waltz, surrounded by two young children and holding a baby.

Isabella: I object! In fact, *we* object! (gesturing to the children). May I introduce Venice (holding up the baby), Apulia (pointing to the middle child)...

Naples: (interrupting and shouting loudly)...AND I'M NAPLES!

Prince Carlo: Is it really true? Is it really you? After all I've done, could you be the one?

Princess Prudence of England realizes what has happened and she leaves in a huff.

Prince Carlo leads Isabella to the altar. The Priest opens his bible.

Priest: "Dearly Beloved we are gathered here to --- Oh well, you all know the rest don't you.

Whole cast and chorus: "WE DO!"

14. Wedding Recessional

Audio: IsabP14Recessional.mscz

Freely based on variations on various musical gestures in the Mendelssohn Wedding March. Sung by the whole cast and chorus.

FINAL BOWS AND CURTAIN