



# The Guide to Musical Theatre

## LA CAVA: THE MUSICAL

Book by Dana Broccoli, based on her novel. Music by Laurence O'Keefe and Stephen Keeling. Lyrics by John Claflin and Laurence O'Keefe. Additional lyrics by Shaun McKenna. Additional music by John Cameron

Victoria Palace, London - Opened 8 June, 2000: Transferred to Piccadilly Theatre, London 21 August, 2000. Closed 3 February, 2001

### SYNOPSIS

*La Cava* is set in the maelstrom of eighth century Spain and Morocco, and is based on a legend concerning the infatuation of King Roderic of Spain with a beautiful young girl whose loyalties are not what they might seem..



### STORY

#### Act 1

Florinda, young, beautiful and spirited, lives with her Father, General Julian Espatorias in Ceuta, North Africa where he is Governor. Julian decides to leave for Spain, where Florinda is to spend one year at King Roderic's Court in Toledo, leaving his second in command, Marcos Cordoba, in charge to "Guard this land for your Gothic honour, your God and King Roderic".

Florinda is forced to leave behind her childhood sweetheart, Somal, whose Father (Tariq) is leader of the Moors and the cause of much unrest in Ceuta. On board his ship to Spain Julian tries to placate his daughter and assure her that she will be safe in Toledo.

Meanwhile in Toledo, King Roderic and his Queen Exilona are engaged in a rare but brief meeting as both have come to welcome Florinda to Toledo. After five years Roderic can still not forgive his Queen who, in her self imprisonment, is detached from life due to one singular mistake. They both reflect on their situation.

Over the weeks that follow Florinda fails to settle at Court, as Gurda the Governess, Isabel and the other Ladies declare the virtues of life within the Castle and learning to become the perfect wife. Florinda asks Isabel to help her to escape back to Ceuta. Unfortunately her plan backfires and, via the Castle's Prison, she finds herself in the Stables where she meets a man who says he knows the King very well and swears he will speak to the King and help her return to her homeland. Unbeknownst to her, Florinda has caught the eye and heart of the King.

Florinda and Isabel are given permission by the King to visit the market with Agon, the Queen's eunuch, as a guide. Florinda strays from the group and finds herself in another part of the market where she meets her friend from the Stables, who on impulse kisses the young Florinda. Agon appears and witnesses the kiss. He calls her name and she turns immediately. Agon, seeing the man, bows "Your Majesty" ... Speechless, Florinda is marched away from the King by Agon. Roderic wanders among the market traders bewildered at his actions.

In Tapestry class the next morning Queen Exilona announces that young Isabel, whom Florinda has befriended, is to be married. She announces to Florinda that his name is Theodomere Perez, she will meet him

soon and be married in one month. Florinda asks Isabel how she can marry someone she does not love and has never kissed!

Agon, who witnessed the kiss between the King and Florinda, confesses to Bishop Oppas what he has seen and asks what he should do. His love and devotion for his Queen is paramount. The Bishop advises Agon to observe and tell him if it goes beyond a kiss and not to underestimate the Lady Florinda.

That evening Florinda is in her bedroom when there is a knock on the door. It is Somal! He could no longer wait and has come for her. El Hajj is at the river with the horses to aid their escape. As they kiss there is another knock at the door. Agon enters and is confronted by Somal who draws his dagger. Agon quickly retreats and calls for the guards. Florinda and Somal desperately look for another way out. As Somal tries to escape through the window he is stopped by a number of guards whom he manages to fight off. Eventually overpowered Somal makes a final desperate lunge at the King who, with a swift blow from his sword slays the intruder and leaves him to die in the courtyard.

Distraught, Florinda sits alone in the Castle Garden. How could her new friend, the King, slay her lover. She will make him pay...somehow. Agon appears as if from nowhere and plants the seed that will change the History of Spain forever. Marcos arrives to tell Florinda that her father has promised him her hand in marriage. Florinda is numb. She needs to think quickly. Florinda advises Marcos that she cannot marry him because she has been "dishonoured, raped", the King has raped her! As Florinda expected, Marcos leaves immediately for Ceuta to tell her Father.

The deed is done. Florinda knows what she must do to avenge her love for Somal. She must now seduce the King and destroy him.

## Act 2

Back in Ceuta, Marcos reveals the news to a distraught Julian. The King was his friend.

Twenty nights Florinda has slept and lived as the King's mistress. The King showers Florinda with gifts. One final surprise is an Orange Grove, all the way from Ceuta. She must now face the truth, her hatred for the King has changed to love, a different kind of love than that of Somal. A chance meeting in the Orange Grove with Ezaak, who is being forced to return to Ceuta because he is a Jew, gives her the chance to send a message to her Father that the news from Marcos about the King was not true. Ezaak promises to pass on this new information.

Back in North Africa the Berber Dance takes us into the world of Tariq and the Moors. Julian finds his way to Tariq's tent and, in his quest to avenge his daughter, tells him that the King has raped her and reminds him that the King also killed his son Somal. Julian offers Tariq the port of Ceuta and all the gold he can carry out of Spain if he will help him overthrow King Roderic. They clasp hands, united in their quest.

Theo and Isabel gaze at the stars as he sings of his love for her. They kiss and Theo leaves as the other ladies engulf Isabel with a wedding song wanting to know all the news. Florinda enters and watches the girls from a distance. Agon, seeing Florinda, quickly informs his Queen that she is in the Ladies' Quarters. A few moments later Queen Exilona enters from the arches above the Courtyard and slowly descends. Distraught in the knowledge of her husband's affair she vents her anger upon Florinda.

Ezaak is summoned by Bishop Oppas who has a proposition for him. Ezaak and the Jews may remain in Spain if they will convert to Christianity. The Church will also give each Jew his own piece of land if they join forces and overthrow King Roderic. Ezaak is horrified, the King is their one true friend, and refuses the Bishop's offer. Oppas tells Ezaak that he betrays his people. Ezaak turns quickly on Oppas telling him that he betrays his King. Ezaak sweeps out of the Bishop's Quarters. Oppas summons his monks to ensure that Ezaak does not go to King Roderic. Ezaak never reaches Ceuta and Florinda's Father. His body is found in the river, he has been murdered.

Florinda and Roderic are in their quarters. She is about to tell him that she carries his child when Captain Dellucia arrives with news from Galaga. Tariq has entered Spain, and by his side rides Julian Espatorias. Roderic is dismayed. Why has Julian invaded and with Tariq, his enemy, at his side? Roderic summons his army and immediately leaves for war. Florinda is devastated and tries desperately to bribe some soldiers for

a horse and supplies so she can ride to Roderic and stop this war. No one will help the daughter of Julian Espatorias. Her last hope is the Queen. She enters her Chambers and asks for her help. Exilona orders her out. Florinda tells her that she carries Roderic's child. She then slowly rises and gives Florinda her Coat of Arms medallion which will see her through the castle gates. Florinda leaves. Exilona turns to Agon and exclaims that, "It is over". With Florinda carrying the King's child there is nothing left for her. She takes his ring from her finger and passes it to Agon who is distressed. The Queen silences him with "There is no suffering in death" ... Agon pours the contents of the ring into her goblet of wine; she drinks and makes her way to her bed to die. Agon asks the Lord for forgiveness, drinks the remainder of the goblet, moves over to his Queen and curls up with her and waits for death.

On the eve of the final battle, Roderic and Julian are in their tents looking over the battlefield. Bishop Oppas asks Roderic to let him go to Julian and try to resolve this war. Oppas lies to both Julian and Roderic, he wants this war to rid the land of Roderic and his goal to bring religious freedom to Spain. Julian and Roderic are now resigned to the inevitable. Florinda arrives at the battlefield to find only Theo, who has been left behind. He informs her that it is too late, the battle has begun. Florinda is alone.

As the King's scribe, Theo recalls the final battle as Julian and Roderic are slain.

Florinda staggers through the smoke and decay of the battlefield looking for Roderic amongst the bodies as the full, horrific devastation of her actions come to light. Eventually she finds Roderic at the bottom of a hill.

## MUSICAL NUMBERS

1. A Place I Am Proud to Call Mine - Tariq, Julian, Marcos, Somal, Ensemble
2. I Will Hold You - Somal, Florinda
3. Little Girl - Julian, Florinda
4. My Dream Came True - I & II - Roderic, Exilona
5. Within These Walls - Gurda, Isabel, Florinda, Girls
6. The Bazaar - The Orchestra (Roderic, Florinda)
7. Why Did I Kiss Her? - Roderic
8. First Kiss - Isabel, Florinda, Exilona, Gurda, Girls
9. Death of Somal - Florinda, Somal
10. A Woman's Hands - Agon, Florinda
11. The Seduction - Florinda
12. Vengeance - Julian
13. Montage - Florinda, Roderic, Servants
14. Say Goodbye - Florinda
15. Berber Dance - Orchestra
16. What Would You Do For Your Child? - Julian, Tariq
17. Theo's Stars/The Wedding - Theo, Isabel, Girls
18. La Cava - Exilona
19. I Fall With You - Julian, Roderic, Berbers, Soldiers
20. Here I Am - Florinda
21. I Stayed Behind & The Battle - Theo, Ensemble
22. Finale Ultimo - Roderic, Florinda

## CAST

King Roderic	Isabel
Florinda Espatorias	Ezzak Mendez
General Julian Espatorias	Somal
Agon	Marcos Cordoba
Queen Exolina	Theo Perez
Archbishop Oppas	Gurda - The Governess
Tariq - the Moor	Plus Chorus