

A New Musical

*Madame*  
**BUTTERMILK**

by Ross Carter

Copyright 2014 by Ross Carter.

Inquiries regarding performance rights may be directed to:

Ross Carter  
ross@rosscarter.com  
859 420-1162

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

<i>Carly Speranza</i>	30-ish, struggling opera singer
<i>Kit McCandless</i>	Carly's agent and roommate
<i>Connor Duke</i>	Carly's college sweetheart
<i>Ford Fairlane</i>	Country band leader
<i>Dody</i>	Ford's longtime girlfriend
<i>Billy Mac Wilson, aka Beemer</i>	Singer and business manager for Ford's band
<i>Jan Swaggart</i>	Domineering stage manager
<i>Art Flanagan</i>	Radio host of an arts program
<i>Ensemble</i>	Fairgoers, band members, stagehands

## PLACE

The performance hall at a state fair, supplemented by an urban apartment, a radio station, a hotel room, an airport lounge.

## TIME

The present.

## LIST OF SONGS

### ACT 1

<i>Don't Call Us, We'll Call You</i>	Carly and Kit
<i>Clutch Me</i>	Beemer and the band
<i>Fais-Do-Do</i>	Ford, Carly, and the band
<i>Baby Me</i>	Connor
<i>Dody's Lament</i>	Dody
<i>What Might Have Been</i>	Connor and Carly
<i>Madame Buttermilk</i>	Carly

### ACT 2

<i>Overdrive</i>	Ford, Beemer, Kit, Art, Swaggart, ensemble
<i>Fun</i>	Kit and Carly
<i>Things Are Awful</i>	Art and Swaggart
<i>It's Always You</i>	Ford
<i>I'm Sick</i>	Kit and Carly
<i>Funny Little People</i>	Carly
<i>Extravaganza</i>	Beemer
<i>Mia Dolce, Perché Si Va?</i>	Connor
<i>I Hear Bells When You Walk By</i>	The band
<i>Fais-Do-Do Reprise 1</i>	The band
<i>Baby Me Reprise</i>	Swaggart
<i>What Might Have Been Reprise</i>	Connor and Carly
<i>Fais-Do-Do Reprise 2</i>	The Company



**ACT 1**

**SCENE 1**

Setting: Carly's apartment in an unspecified large city. Like all settings it is minimally represented.

Lights Up: A mobile telephone is ringing.

*CARLY enters and rummages through her purse for the phone.*

**CARLY**

Keep ringing! Keep ringing! Hello, this is Carly Speranza. ... No I am not interested in Medicare supplement insurance!

*She ends the call as Habanera from Carmen begins to vamp. During the song, KIT enters, and we see that they share an apartment.*

SONG: DON'T CALL US WE'LL CALL YOU

**CARLY**

I AUDITIONED FOR LA BOHÈME  
AND MY HEEL GOT TANGLED IN MY HEM.  
I WAS SINGING MUSETTA'S WALTZ,  
AND I WOUND UP PERFORMING SOMERSAULTS.

AT AUDITIONS I'M SO NAIVE,  
I SING MY ARIA AND RECITATIVE,  
THEN THEY QUICKLY END THE INTERVIEW:  
GOODBYE GOOD LUCK DON'T CALL US WE'LL CALL YOU.

*CARLY steps into a special light. She is now auditioning, speaking to the casting director. Music vamps.*

Hello. Yes, my name is Carly Speranza, and may I say that it is a lifelong dream of mine to sing Carmen. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to audition for this wonderful role. Over here? Yes, I'm ready.

L'AMOUR! L'AMOUR! L'AMOU—

Yes. Thank you. You'll call me. Right.

OPERA COMIQUE, BUFFA OR GRAND,  
YOU NAME IT I CAN SING IT ON DEMAND,  
BEL CANTO, COMMEDIA DELL ARTE,  
I TRY OUT BUT I NEVER GET THE PART.

**KIT**

YOUR TIME WILL COME!

**CARLY**

MY TIME WILL COME, WHEN I'M SO OLD ALL I CAN DO IS HUM.

**KIT**

YOU'LL BE THE BUZZ!

**CARLY**

I'LL BE THE BUZZ,  
I'LL BE A HAS BEEN WHO NEVER WAS.

PORGY AND BESS I SANG WITH ALL MY SOUL,

**KIT**

AND YOUR AUDITION WAS A HUGE SUCCESS.  
YOU WERE OFFERED THE TITLE ROLE.

**CARLY**

BUT THE ROLE THEY OFFERED WASN'T BESS.

I PUT ON MY MOST REVEALING BLOUSE,  
WHEN I AUDITIONED FOR DIE FLEDERMAUS,

**KIT**

YOU LOOKED LOVELY BESIDE THE BAT.

**CARLY**

BUT THE DIRECTOR SAID THAT I WAS FLAT.

*CARLY is auditioning again in the special light. Music vamps.*

What's that? Do I smoke? Why no, sir, I take very good care of my voice. Excuse me? You want Carmen to smoke while she sings? Yes I know she is a cigarette worker—certainly.

L'AMOUR! L'AMOUR!

*(Paroxysms of coughing)*

AT AUDITIONS FOR LOHENGRIN,  
I HAD A FEVER BLISTER ON MY CHIN.  
AT LUCIA DE LAMMERMOOR  
I NEVER EVEN MADE IT PAST THE DOOR.

PERHAPS MY FINEST PERFORMANCE YET  
WAS TOSCA FALLING FROM THE PARAPET.  
THEY SAID "FINE WE'LL CALL YOU DON'T CALL US,"  
THOUGH I HAD JUST PERFORMED A TRIPLE LUTZ.

*KIT steps into a special light. She is making a telephone call.  
Music vamps.*

**KIT**

Hello, this is Kit McCandless, agent for the soprano Carly Speranza. I was wondering if we could set up an audition for your upcoming production of *Il Trovatore*. Miss Speranza's voice would be perfect for Leonora—I beg your pardon? *Coro di Zingari*? Isn't that *The Anvil Chorus*? I'll get back to you.

**CARLY**

L'AMOUR!

**KIT**

I TRY IN VAIN.

**CARLY**

L'AMOUR!

**KIT**

I'VE RACKED MY BRAIN!



**CARLY**

L'AMOUR!

**KIT**

WHO CAN EXPLAIN

**CARLY AND KIT**

L'AMOUR!

**KIT**

SOMEDAY THAT PHONE IS GOING TO RING,  
AND THEY WILL OFFER YOU A CHANCE TO SING.  
YOU WILL AMAZE THEM WITH YOUR VOICE.

**CARLY**

I'LL TRADE MY BUICK FOR A NEW ROLLS ROYCE!

**KIT**

YOU'LL RUN THE SHOW!

**CARLY**

AUDITIONS WE WILL HOLD, FOR SINGERS AND DIRECTORS TOO.

**CARLY AND KIT**

AND WHEN IT'S THROUGH—

**CARLY**

AND WHEN IT'S THROUGH,

**CARLY AND KIT**

WE WILL SAY DON'T CALL US, WE'LL CALL YOU!

*End of song. KIT's phone rings.*

**KIT**

Hello, Kit McCandless. Yes, I am the agent for Carly Speranza. Excuse me, this connection ... did you say Carmen? Why, yes, I believe she is available ... Mezzo-soprano?

*KIT looks inquiringly at CARLY.*

**CARLY**

Carmen is a mezzo-soprano!

**KIT**

Yes, she can sing mezzo—excuse me, did you say Grand Opera? Why yes, of course, Miss Speranza has sung Grand Opera many times. That’s right. ...  
Tonight?

**CARLY**

Tonight?

**KIT**

Tonight. Yes, I see, rehearsal tonight and performance tomorrow night.

**CARLY**

What??

**KIT**

Does she know all the Carmen songs?

**CARLY**

YES!

**KIT**

Oh, yes, indeed, she is very familiar with—why, yes, I think it’s just dandy, too. Radio station WUWV. Could I have your name again, please? Ford. Very well, Mr Ford, if you will fax me the contract right away I will sign it and fax it back to you. That’s right. Thank you.

**CARLY**

Well?

**KIT**

Guess what?

**CARLY**

What do you mean “Guess what?” Who were you talking to?

**KIT**

What’s your favorite role of all time?

**CARLY**

Kit, stop playing games and tell me—

**KIT**

The part you’ve wanted to sing since you were a kid?

**CARLY**

Kit, just shut up and tell me what's going on!

**KIT**

Well I can't do both, can I?

**CARLY**

KIT!

**KIT**

OK. Here goes. Are you ready? You're going to sing Carmen!

**CARLY**

Kit, this is not the sort of thing you joke about. I was singing The Gypsy Dance when other kids were still on The Good Ship Lollipop.

**KIT**

Carly, I kid you not. I just booked you to sing Carmen.

**CARLY**

You're deadly serious?

**KIT**

I swear on a stack of librettos.

**CARLY**

Well, then. *(Beat.)* Yippee! Hurray! *(Sings)* L'AMOUR! L'AMOUR! L'AMOUR!

**KIT**

Now listen, you have to move quickly. The performance is tomorrow night. The soprano has lost her voice, there's no understudy, and they need someone who already knows the music to step in at the last minute. There's a rehearsal tonight and the performance—one show only—is tomorrow night.

**CARLY**

I've got to leave right away!

**KIT**

You get packing, I'll get your plane ticket. You're flying to Charleston.

**CARLY**

Ah, the stately Old South! I shall unwind on the veranda with a mint julep.

**KIT**

A taxi will be waiting at the airport to take you to a radio station for an interview. Then someone will take you straight away to dress rehearsal.

**CARLY**

Kit, this is too good to be true! I've wanted to sing Carmen as long as I can remember! I can hardly believe this! All my life has been a prelude to this moment.

*CARLY sings the melody of "Près des Remparts de Seville."*

FINALLY I WILL BE SINGING CARMEN! CARMEN CARMEN!

*CARLY exits.*

**KIT**

I wish I could be there to see it!

*Lights fade.*

**SCENE 2**

Setting: Rehearsal stage at the state fair.

Lights Up: The band is playing. DODY and BEEMER are standing behind microphones. DODY's neck is heavily wrapped. There is a third empty mic.

*JAN SWAGGART enters L, carrying a clipboard.*

**SWAGGART**

All right, now, you fellers ready to sing? And the answer better be yes because I'm the stage manager and I don't take no for an answer. You're not the only bunch we got to rehearse today.

**BEEMER**

We're ready. Hit it.

*SWAGGART exits.*

*SONG: CLUTCH ME*

**THE CAR MEN**

CLUTCH ME, MY DARLIN' CLUTCH ME.  
CLUTCH ME ALL THROUGH THE NIGHT.  
CLUTCH ME LIKE YOU USED TO DO,  
I'LL BE DOUBLE CLUTCHIN' YOU.  
I'LL BE A DEER, DEAR, STUCK IN YOUR HEADLIGHTS.

**BEEMER**

I WAS TAKIN' MY GAL OUT FOR SUPPER,  
THE GIRL WHO SETS MY HEART ON FIRE.  
I PUT ON MY BEST T-SHIRT,  
I SWEAR THEY WARN'T NO SPECK OF DIRT,  
AND SHE SAID "DARLING CAN YOU PLEASE CHANGE ATTIRE?"

**THE CAR MEN**

Change attire? Change attire? Change a tire!

**BEEMER**

I TOLD HER I COULD CHANGE A TIRE WHEN I WAS IN MY TEENS.

JUST HANG ON FOR A MINUTE, I'LL PUT ON MY OLD BLUE JEANS.  
BUT ALL WE GOTTA DO IS PUMP IT UP BEFORE WE GO.

*(shouts)* Your front is looking fine, but your left rear's a little low.

*DODY reacts. Band vamps and ad libs as desired.*

**THE CAR MEN**

CLUTCH ME, MY DARLIN' CLUTCH ME.  
CLUTCH ME AND DON'T DASH AWAY.  
CLUTCH ME LIKE YOU USED TO DO,  
I'LL BE DOUBLE CLUTCHIN' YOU.  
WE'LL PUT THE PEDAL TO THE METAL EVERY DAY.

*Vamp. Ding ding! sound of car in gas station. The following passage is spoken by two band members.*

**BAND MEMBER AS DRIVER**

Fill 'er up, please.

**BAND MEMBER AS ATTENDANT**

Say, ain't that one of them new French cars?

**BAND MEMBER AS DRIVER**

Belgian. It's a Poirot.

**BAND MEMBER AS ATTENDANT**

Well, if you'll pop the hood, I'll check the radiator for you.

**BAND MEMBER AS DRIVER**

It doesn't have a radiator.

**BAND MEMBER AS ATTENDANT**

No radiator?

**BAND MEMBER AS DRIVER**

It's an air-cooled Poirot.

**THE CAR MEN**

CLUTCH ME, MY DARLIN' CLUTCH ME.  
ACCELERATE YOUR LOVE FOR HEAVEN SAKES.

CLUTCH ME LIKE YOU USED TO DO  
I'LL BE DOUBLE CLUTCHIN' YOU.  
COME WHATEVER WE WON'T EVER HIT THE BRAKES.

*End of song. Throughout the following dialogue, DODY does not speak, but enthusiastically nods agreement with BEEMER.*

*SWAGGART enters L, with clipboard.*

**SWAGGART**

OK, the next song is Mr Fairlane and Miss Packard. I assume you are Miss Packard. Where's Mr Fairlane?

**BEEMER**

He's on his way. He had to stop by the—

**SWAGGART**

Hey ho now hold on just a cotton pickin' minute. He had to stop by somewhere. I see. Something else was more important than this rehearsal, is that it?

**BEEMER**

Well, you see Ms Swaggart—

**SWAGGART**

Now you boys know this is your only rehearsal, don't you?

**BEEMER**

Yes, Ms Swaggart.

**SWAGGART**

I mean, this ain't some VFW hall or some—whatever. This is the state fair! This is big time. We've got sound checks to do, lights to check, uhh—

**BEEMER**

Yes, Ms Swaggart, we understand. Don't we boys?

*The band mutters agreement.*

**SWAGGART**

Well I'm glad to hear it.

**BEEMER**

The stage manager's word is law. Ain't that right boys?

*The band mutters agreement.*

**SWAGGART**

That's right. You got that right. The stage manager's word is law. Cause I can cancel this act in two shakes of a sheep's tail if you can't stick to the plan according to the ... plan.

**BEEMER**

Yes sir.

**SWAGGART**

All right then. All right then. Now if you ask me real nice we can take five while we wait for your guy to show up.

**BEEMER**

Ms Swaggart, could we please take five minutes while we wait for our guy to show up?

**SWAGGART**

No.

**BEEMER**

But you just said—

**SWAGGART**

I don't have to do this, you know.

**BEEMER**

Yes sir, I know. *(To Dody)* We know, don't we?

**SWAGGART**

Huh. Well. You caught me in a good mood. OK, everybody, take five! Take five, everybody! And five ain't six!

*SWAGGART exits L. BEEMER and DODY cross to exit R.*

**BEEMER**

Don't you worry, Dody. He'll be here any minute now.

*Lights fade.*



**SCENE 3**

Setting: A radio station.

Lights Up: Table and two chairs.

*ART FLANAGAN, FORD, and CARLY enter.*

**ART**

And this is our little studio. Our radio station might be small, but we have a big audience. Now you two just sit at this table. We don't have an engineer here tonight, so I'll be up in the booth running the controls.

*ART points to the imaginary booth located somewhere out toward the audience.*

But you can hear me in these headphones and we can all talk just like we're sitting around the table together. All right?

**CARLY**

Yes, sir, Mr Flanagan.

**FORD**

Sure thing.

**ART**

OK, let's do it.

*ART exits. CARLY and FORD put on headphones. While they wait for Art to start the show, CARLY smiles pleasantly at FORD, who responds with a big grin. She becomes increasingly uncomfortable as his grin persists.*

*From this point on, we hear ART's voice through the speakers.*

**ART**

OK guys, here we go.

*Music up and fade. ART changes his voice to a big, broad radio style.*

**ART**

Well, a big good evening to our radio listeners and welcome to Arts Showcase with your host yours truly, Art Flanagan. Tonight on Arts Showcase we have two

incredibly talented singers and performers. We have Miss Carly Speranza (*Carly beams*), professional opera singer, soprano, who will be making a special appearance tomorrow night. And we also have Mr Ford Fairlane, bandleader and singer for the top country music band in this region—I think we can safely say you're the top band, can't we Ford?

**FORD**

Well, that's mighty nice of you, Art. I'm just happy to be part of the band that plays for the wonderful Miss Pinto Packard.

**ART**

Now tell us, Ford, a little about the band. Let's start with the name. How did that come about?

**FORD**

Well, I had been singing and playing professionally for a few years under the name Ford Fairlane, and when my girlfriend started singing as Miss Pinto Packard I thought, hey, Ford and Packard, that's two cars! So we decided right then that we'd start a band called the Car Men.

*Carly looks worried.*

**ART**

And we've got a big night coming up for the Car Men. Tell us about it.

**FORD**

Well, of course, everybody knows and loves Earl Conway.

*FORD nods to CARLY, who is blank.*

**ART**

Country music recording artist. Legendary artist, I should say.

**FORD**

Well, the legendary Earl Conway is going to perform at the state fair this year. And we—that is, Pinto Packard and the Car Men—are going to be the opening act.

**ART**

That's quite a break for your band.

**FORD**

That's right, Art, this is the biggest show we've ever done. They're expecting a record crowd. People will be coming from all over to hear Earl Conway. We're totally excited and honored to be chosen to open the show for him.

**ART**

And when is the big show?

**FORD**

Tomorrow night.

*CARLY squirms in her chair.*

**ART**

Tomorrow night at the state fair, opening act for Earl Conway, Pinto Packard and the Car Men. Now your fans are going to see something different tomorrow night, aren't they?

**FORD**

Yes, Art, Pinto—or Dody, that's her real name—

**ART**

Dody?

**FORD**

Yeah, Dody had to have some emergency surgery this week and it has affected her singing voice.

**ART**

I'm sorry to hear that. I hope it wasn't too serious.

**FORD**

It was just a tonsillectomy. Of course it means she can't sing for a while. Or talk, even.

**ART**

So you had to find a replacement.

**FORD**

That's right. I called every singer I could think of. Now it takes a very special singer to stand in for a talent like Dody. I interviewed a mess o' sopranos—

**CARLY**

*(aside)* Mezzo-soprano!

**FORD**

—and none of them worked out. Then somebody recommended a young lady who's going to work out real well for us. She's sung at the Grand Ole Opry!

**CARLY**

*(aside)* Grand opera!

**FORD**

Not only that, she already knows all the Car Men songs!

**CARLY**

Aughhh!

**ART**

Well, let's meet her right now. Carly Speranza, appearing at the state fair as Miss Pinto Packard!

*CARLY's looks could kill.*

**ART**

Let me start with your name. Carly. Now that's a perfect name for the Car Men, isn't it? Is Carly your real name?

**CARLY**

Yes. Well, it's short for—for—

**ART**

Short for what?

**CARLY**

*(wincing)* Carlotta.

**FORD**

Car Lot—. Hey! That's—

**CARLY**

Excuse me, Art, do you have a five-second bleep filter?

**ART**

Yes we do, why?