

High School (non) Musical

by

Jonathan Dorf

Cast of Characters

Toy Boatin, high school junior, bowling star and all-around cool guy
Boy Boatin, Toy's dad and the coach of the bowling team
Soy Boatin, Toy's hippie mother
Teen Boy at the karaoke party
Teen Girl at the karaoke party
Teens at karaoke party
MC at the karaoke party
Gaberella, brainy high school junior with a tragically bad voice
Cheerleaders
Principal, female
Dad Mom, male, Toy's best bowling buddy, high school junior
Speak, Toy's other bowling buddy, junior but actually an alien
Bowlers
Failure, female, high school junior, the captain of the surgical decathlon team
Errant Surgical Decathlete
Surgical Decathletes
Mrs. Beckett von Shakespeare, over-the-top drama teacher
Shitzu, drama queen and high school junior
Cryin, Shitzu's twin brother and her usual co-lead in school plays
Pino, first-year student announcer, short for Pinocchio
Detention Kids
Drama Club Kids
First Year Student, male, Failure's surgical guinea pig
Mirror, female, hip and difficult, Shitzu's genie-like looking glass
First Student Merchandiser
Second Student Merchandiser
Deep Note, female, sophomore, writer/composer of the Muse Cycle
First Auditioner
Second Auditioner
Third Auditioner
Security Guards
Speak's Parents, aliens

The principals (Toy, Boy, Gaberella, Dad, Speak, Failure, Pino, Beckett von Shakespeare, Cryin, Shitzu and Deep Note) require 6 male and 5 female actors. An ensemble of flexible size and gender, anywhere from 4-6 actors minimum to an unlimited maximum, plays all of the other roles. Roles may be multiple-cast as necessary, and even some of the principals could play other roles.

Setting and Production Notes

The play has multiple settings, which can be suggested through the use of sound, lighting, props and set pieces, rather than fully-realized sets. Using playing areas will best keep the action moving, which is essential.

Pacing, particularly between scenes, should be brisk. To this end, if you can minimize or do away with blackouts, feel free.

ACT I

SCENE 1

(New Year's Eve. The SOUND of BOWLING PINS falling. Lights up to reveal TOY BOATIN, high school junior and all-around cool guy, frozen in his bowling follow-through. His father, BOY BOATIN, 40s and wearing sweats, looks on.)

TOY

Yes!

BOY

Three strikes and they are out!

TOY

Just kept my head in the frame and my--

BOY

Hand in the lane. My son, the machine. Tell me what you're gonna do to those pretenders to the bowling throne.

TOY

I'm gonna strike early and often.

BOY

Yeah?

TOY

I'm gonna spare no one.

BOY

Yeah?

TOY

I will pin them to the wall like a...
(doesn't want to say it)
a...

BOY

(from rote)

Like a dead butterfly impaled through its spine in my private collection.

TOY

Dad!

BOY

What?

TOY
That's totally disgusting.

BOY
Just trying to get the captain of the Roswell High School
bowling team in the zone for the championship match.
(beat)
Who do we spare?!

TOY
No one!

BOY
Who do we strike?!

TOY
Everyone!

(Enter SOY BOATIN, wife of Boy, mother of
Toy, late 30s, and dressed like a hippie.)

BOY
Rack 'em up--

TOY
(going into his bowling stance)
And knock 'em down.

(Toy bowls, but the pins are virtual.)

BOY
And bury them beneath the rubble of their shattered dreams,
while their flesh is eaten by--

SOY
Honey, it's New Year's Eve. Harmony!

BOY
Sorry, Soy.

SOY
(beat)
We need to get ready.

BOY
But we're on a roll.

TOY
Who do we strike?!

SOY
You boys.

I'm Boy. He's Toy. BOY

You know what I mean. Now come on--the New Year's Eve Be-In
is flowing already. SOY

One more frame. TOY

We'll gather in the inner peace chamber...
(sidling up to Boy) SOY

One more game. BOY

And watch the New Year's Crystal drop. SOY

Soy, the kid's on fire. BOY

Toy, you don't want to miss the teen party. I hear there's
karaoke--you can get your funky groove on. SOY
(to Toy)
(beat)
Don't you worry--no matter what, you'll always be my little
Toy.

Mom, maybe I don't want to be a toy anymore. TOY

Don't ruin the moment. SOY

(Exit Soy and Boy. Beat. Exit Toy as the
virtual bowling alley turns into a banquet
room. Enter lots of TEENS wearing flowing
robes. A BOY and a GIRL perform on a small
stage area, perhaps spotlit. There also
might be a karaoke screen, or it could
simply be implied. There is no music.)

Infinite. TEEN BOY

Duck. TEEN GIRL

Ever flying... TEEN BOY

Flying. TEEN GIRL

Ever flowing... TEEN BOY

Flowing. Flowing. Flowing. TEEN GIRL

Like Moby. TEEN BOY

Duck. TEEN GIRL

(Enter Toy just as they freeze in a tableau. He's wearing typical dressy casual teen wear. As he enters, on the other side of the room, enter GABERELLA, same age, also not wearing robes. Toy and Gaberella clap for the performers, but they're the only ones: everyone else snaps their fingers. Once Toy and Gaberella realize they're the only ones clapping, they stop. An MC, male or female, perhaps college age if your production is using older actors, gets hit by a spotlight.)

MC
Looks like we've got a case of the claps here. What do we say to our newbies?

TEENS
That's all right, that's OK
We still love you anyway.

MC
Now snap it up and give them love!
(There's a storm of SNAPPING around them.)
Can you dig? There's more karaoke to go, so let's not interrupt our flow...

(The scene carries on in pantomime around Toy and Gaberella, with another pair of PERFORMERS getting on the karaoke stage and gesturing as if they're performing. Toy and Gaberella find each other.)

HEY. TOY

HEY. GABERELLA

TOY

(beat)

I feel totally out of place here.

GABERELLA

I don't know you, and I'm sure I'll never see you again, so I'd feel totally comfortable having a meaningful conversation with you and revealing all of my hopes and fears.

TOY

Cool. I'd be up for that too.

(The karaoke performance reaches a silently contorted, snapping crescendo. The volume returns, and in the SNAPPING, the spotlight suddenly shines on Toy and Gaberella. The MC might even thrust microphones into their hands.)

MC

Please welcome to the stage our next two karaoke stylists--

TOY

Hey--we were about to have a meaningful conversation.

MC

You two know each other?

(Toy and Gaberella shake their heads.)

What do you think this is--the internet?

(He retreats, leaving Toy and Gaberella looking like deer in the headlights.)

GABERELLA

I've never done karaoke.

TOY

Just wait for the music.

(If your production uses a karaoke screen, then words should appear--but no music.)

GABERELLA

I don't think there is any.

(Long pause. The audience starts to hiss. This could get ugly.)

TOY

(jumps in)

Two houses.

Romeo and Juliet.

GABERELLA
(following his lead)
There is a man talking on a toy phone.

TOY
Two groups... One jock....

GABERELLA
Balls!

TOY
One brain.

GABERELLA
Computers and pencils and formulas, oh my!

TOY
Worlds apart.

GABERELLA
Talking on a toy phone about 20 pounds of chicken.

TOY
He didn't buy--

GABERELLA
Not any.

TOY
Just coffee.

GABERELLA
Temporary.

TOY
This is not.

GABERELLA
Is not.

TOY
Is not his story.

GABERELLA
Is not gravy.

TOY
Not gravy.

GABERELLA
It's theirs.

TOY
Story.

GABERELLA

Not gravy.

(There's a storm of SNAPPING, as the audience goes crazy: they're a hit! NEW AGE music begins, and the teens begin to dance--the music should be as undanceable as possible--as Toy and Gaberella move away from the stage.)

TOY

You have a really great speaking voice.

GABERELLA

You too.

TOY

I'm Toy.

GABERELLA

I'm Gaberella.

TOY

Gabriela?

GABERELLA

No. *Gaberella*. It doesn't rhyme with Thomas Jefferson.

TOY

(as if that explains it)

Oh.

(pulls out his cell phone)

If we swap cell numbers, we could still have a meaningful conversation, because we'll never see each other again--right?

TEENS AND MC

(counting down to New Year's--somewhere during this count, Gaberella disappears into the throng of revelers)

10. 9. 8. 7. 6. 5. 4. 3. 2. 1!

TOY

Happy new year!

(realizing that everyone else is humming and swaying, and that he's the only one in the room who has said "happy new year")

Gaberella, are we the only ones who are--

(He realizes she's gone. He pulls his shirt off to reveal a wife beater. A la Stanley Kowalski)

Gaberella!

(Blackout.)

SCENE 2

(The Monday after New Year's. A BELL RINGS. Lights up on the entrance hallway of Roswell High School in Roswell, New Mexico. STUDENTS of all varieties arrive for the day. A group of CHEERLEADERS, who may be all female or have some males as well, cheer their way down the hall.)

CHEERLEADERS

Stir it to the left,
Shake it to the right,
Teacup pride's gonna fly tonight. [Repeats]

(On the side of the stage, separate from the action, PINO, a student announcer, younger than Toy and his crew, stands looking lonely.)

PINO

Good morning, Roswell High, and happy new year!

(He blows on a kazoo. Enter Boy Boatin arguing with the PRINCIPAL, female.)

BOY

The Teacups?!

PRINCIPAL

Flying Teacups.

BOY

This is ridiculous. You can't change nicknames right before the championship.

PRINCIPAL

The Board feels that *Flying Saucers* is potentially offensive to any aliens among us.

BOY

How?

PRINCIPAL

It perpetuates a stereotype.

BOY

People are going to laugh at us.

PRINCIPAL

Not when Toy bowls our way to a state championship.

(beat)

Teacup pride, Boy. Teacup pride.

(As the Principal bounces through the still-cheering Cheerleaders and exits, enter Toy, wearing a bowling letterman's jacket, flanked by DAD and SPEAK, his best bowling buds, and perhaps other members of the bowling team. The team can be all male, or mixed gender. Throughout the play, Speak seems to be looking for something, often peering around him, on the ground or in the air, though not so much that it becomes distracting.)

VARIOUS STUDENTS

(as Toy and the bowlers go by--these lines could be overlapped, said by individuals or by small groups unless otherwise specified)

Teacup pride!

Yeah, Toy!

We're counting on you, Toy!

You de man, Toy.

One lump or two, Toy!

Shaken, not stirred, Toy!

(Everyone stops for a moment to look at the Shaken, Not Stirred Kid. The Shaken, Not Stirred Kid conforms:)

Teacup pride!

(Activity resumes, with lots of high-fiving, back patting and chest thumping among the bowlers and their fans. Toy might even sign autographs. Enter the SURGICAL DECATHLON TEAM, led by FAILURE, female and overachieving--almost.)

FAILURE

(like the old, familiar song--or not)

The foot bone's connected to the--

SURGICAL DECATHLETES

Ankle bone.

FAILURE

The ankle bone's connected to the--

SURGICAL DECATHLETES

Leg bone.

FAILURE

The leg bone's connected to the--

SURGICAL DECATHLETES
Knee bone.

ERRANT DECATHLETE
Hip bone.

FAILURE

(turning on the Errant Decathlete)

Knee. Repeat after me: knee.

ERRANT DECATHLETE

Knee.

FAILURE

Knee.

ERRANT DECATHLETE

Knee.

FAILURE

From now on, you are the knight who says, "knee."

ERRANT DECATHLETE

I am the knight who says "knee."

(Failure sees Toy and the rest of the
bowling team.)

FAILURE

Jocks.

DAD

Nerds.

FAILURE

Someday, when you need brain surgery--oh wait, you don't
have a brain.

DAD

At least I'm not...

(can't think of anything)

not...

(MRS. BECKETT VON SHAKESPEARE, drama teacher
who puts the D in dramatic, sweeps into the
hall, cutting right between the bowling-
decathlon confrontation. SHITZU, drama
queen, and her brother, CRYIN, ambiguously
gay, follow Beckett Von Shakespeare like the
kiss-ups they are.)

BECKETT VON SHAKESPEARE

I have come back transformed, transfigured, transfat free.

(Beckett Von Shakespeare puts up an audition
poster for the "Winter Muse Cycle.")

CRYIN

We are putty in your hands, clay to be molded--

SHITZU

What happened to the winter musicale?

BECKETT VON SHAKESPEARE

It has been transformed, transfigured, transmogrified into the Winter Muse Cycle.

(A BELL RINGS. Students enter with desks and chairs, converting the hallway into a classroom. Toy, Shitzu, Cryin, Speak, Dad, Failure and others find their seats. Just as Beckett von Shakespeare is about to start, enter the Principal with Gaberella.)

PRINCIPAL

Everyone, let's give a big Roswell welcome to Gaberella, our new student.

BECKETT VON SHAKESPEARE

(waiting for a last name)

Gaberella...?

PRINCIPAL

No last name. Just Gaberella.

GABERELLA

Like Madonna.

(The Principal exits. Gaberella finds a seat. She and Toy barely have time for a moment of recognition before the announcements start.)

PINO

Good morning, Roswell.

(silence)

I said good morning, Roswell. This is a two-way intercom, people.

CLASS

Good morning.

PINO

That's right--you know me, you love me--it's Pino in the morning, and only you have the power to make me a real boy.

(Beckett von Shakespeare begins to mime.)

BECKETT VON SHAKESPEARE

Mime with me, children.

(The students reluctantly stand and mime--many having no idea what they're doing--as the announcements continue.)

PINO

Roswell's pride and joy, the Bowling Teacups go for the first state title in school history

(mimed cheering for Toy)

against our archrival, Truth or Consequences. Teacup pride! And there's more--on Friday, our Surgical Decathlon Team goes live--that means real instruments and a real body. Oh--and auditions for the Winter Muse Cycle are tomorrow during activities period in the auditorium. On a personal note, I'm looking for someone to be my friend.

TOY

(whispering to Dad as he tries to mime)

What class is this?

DAD

I don't know. We've just always shown up here.

BECKETT VON SHAKESPEARE

Mr. Boatin, every time a person shatters the sacred silence, a mime falls down dead. And a mime, Mr. Mom, is a terrible thing to waste.

SHITZU AND CRYIN

(making a show of their agreement)

Mmmmmhmmmm.

BECKETT VON SHAKESPEARE

(turning on Shitzu and Cryin)

Sound itself is a detentionable offense.

TOY

But--

SHITZU

You can't--

CRYIN

Be serious.

DAD

I'm sorry, but there's no way Toy can--

BECKETT VON SHAKESPEARE

I do not take the death of even one mime lightly. Do you, Mr. Mom?

(Dad shakes his head. Beckett von Shakespeare comes to a resting pose in front of a small shrine filled with pictures of mimes that reads, "In Memoriam: Gone But Not Forgotten.")

Toy, Dad, Shitzu, Cryin and--new girl, what is your name again?

GABERELLA

Gaberella.

BECKETT VON SHAKESPEARE

You have all shattered the sacred silence.

GABERELLA

But I didn't--

BECKETT VON SHAKESPEARE

I asked you your name, and you murdered a mime.

GABERELLA

That's not fair.

BECKETT VON SHAKESPEARE

If only the mime you ended could similarly raise his voice in protest.

GABERELLA

But you were talking too.

BECKETT VON SHAKESPEARE

I have a mimefield.

(beat)

If I called your name, I will see you this afternoon in detention, where you will help build the set for the Winter Muse Cycle so that I can have it ready in time for callbacks, which is completely irrational, but I am allowed to be completely irrational in the name of the theatre.

PINO

Sorry for the interruption, but there is a dead mime in the fire lane. Please remove the mime immediately, or he will be towed.

(A BELL RINGS. Students stand.)

BECKETT VON SHAKESPEARE

Winter Muse Cycle auditions are tomorrow. Sign up, sign up, sign up!

(The students exit to the hallway. Toy and Gaberella find themselves together away from the others. Dad sees them seem to recognize each other and follows, picking up a small potted plant and holding it ridiculously in front of his face to hide. As the scene continues, Dad inches his way closer, with Toy and Gaberella pausing anytime they think someone might be listening. At those moments, Dad takes extra care to hide behind his plant.)

TOY
I can't believe
you're here!

GABERELLA
I can't believe
you're here!

GABERELLA
My Mom is stalking this guy who works in Area 51. So we
moved here.

TOY
That's crazy.

GABERELLA
I know. You hear rumors about this secret government
quarantine zone, but then to find out that it really
exists...

TOY
Is not gravy.

GABERELLA
Talking on a toy phone about 20 pounds of chicken.

TOY
I can't believe we did that.
(beat)
So that still doesn't explain how of all the high schools in
the world, you suddenly transfer into mine.

GABERELLA
No, it totally doesn't.
(Beat. They end up standing in front of the
Winter Muse Cycle poster.)
Are you thinking of...?

TOY
Me?
(beat--shakes his head)
I bowl. That's what I do.
(beat)
Are you?

(Before Gaberella can answer, Shitzu and
Cryin approach. With a flourish, Shitzu
signs up herself and Cryin for the audition,
literally taking up the entire poster.)

SHITZU
I'm sorry--you weren't planning to--

GABERELLA
Oh no.

SHITZU
You were staring at it.

GABERELLA

I didn't meant to--

SHITZU

Toy, you really must see me--

CRYIN

Us.

SHITZU

Play the lead in the Winter Muse Cycle.

TOY

(what else can he say?)

Sure.

GABERELLA

I thought auditions weren't 'til tomorrow.

SHITZU

I'll be the lead.

CRYIN

We're always the leads.

SHITZU

You missed my Ophelia.

CRYIN

And my Hamlet.

TOY

Bowling practice. It's intense.

SHITZU

Let me show you my death scene.

(She sits Toy down, doing her best to brush
Gaberella out of the way. Shitzu goes into
"acting" mode. Sotto to Cryin)

Emotional honesty.

CRYIN

Unleash your inner diva.

SHITZU

(Singing as Ophelia--while it should be nutty
performance-wise, as singing goes, it
shouldn't be bad.)

He is dead and gone, lady--

CRYIN

(sotto)

This is the pre-death scene.

SHITZU

(out of character)

Highlights only.

(back to Ophelia--singing)

He is dead and gone;

At his head a grass-green turf,

At his heels a stone.

White his shroud as the mountain snow--

CRYIN

(indicating himself)

Guest starring as Gertrude...

(as Gertrude)

Alas, look here, my lord.

SHITZU

(singing)

Larded with sweet flowers

Which bewept to the grave did go

With true-love showers...

CRYIN

Skip, skip, skip...

SHITZU

Good night, ladies; good night, sweet ladies; good night,
good night.

(She blows kisses. Toy and Giberella aren't
sure what to do. They are about to clap
when:)

CRYIN

Wait!

SHITZU

(to Cryin)

Sponge.

(Cryin hands Shitzu a sponge, preferably a
large one, which he seemingly pulls from
nowhere--perhaps even from his pants.)

CRYIN

(to Toy and Giberella)

Cry if you need to.

(Shitzu spins around as if insane, gesturing
wildly and dramatically, then slowly breaks
down, sinking to her knees.)

The silence is so powerful.

(Shitzu slides face-down into the sponge.
Her arms thrash about for a moment, then she
goes still.)

Want to read more? Hit the back button and follow the instructions to order a perusal copy of ***High School (non) Musical!***