

Well, I never! - chamber sing-game for children

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CAST OF CHARACTERS:

Girl, Rosalie Smart – young girl, soprano

Wizard – actor, or voice off stage

Virtuoso, friend – pianist, narrator



This song cycle (singing game) is built on the story of cheerful but blindly self-centered Rosalie. Rosalie has been punished by the Wizard with “the spell of infinite singing” for her conceitedness. That is why she can't talk. She can only sing and cannot move if there is no sound of music. To break the spell, she has to solve the Riddle and find out what is hidden under the magic hat. To do this, she travels across the hat, jumping from patch to patch. The patches cover the holes through which Rosalie uncovers subsequent fragments of the mystery using her sense of touch. Six patches mean six songs, and six chances for solving the Riddle!

Set: grand piano and a big double-sided chart showing a big hat, on which there are fields (patches) marked (chart can be replaced by projections). The order of arias is only determined for the first and the last two arias, the three in the middle can be decided by the draw of “action cards”, although the lottery can be omitted and performers can follow the originally numbered order as well)

Wizard (to children):

Ho ho ho, attention, attention! Welcome warmly in my game! My singing game, my sing-game! *(presenting the Girl: Rosalie hypnotized enters the stage, and she stops in the center with her back turned to the audience)*

This is Miss Rosalie Smart. Like all smarts she thought she knew a lot. She trumpeted everywhere that there were no secrets hidden from her. But that was a delusion! She didn't care of other people's views, so I've given her a task that's truly difficult. The “Riddle of Riddles”!

Rosalie who thought she knew a lot, I've turned into diva! Ha ha ha! She became a pawn in my game. The pawn on which I've cast a spell. The spell of “infinite singing”.

To rescue her, you need to help her guess what's hidden under the magic hat!

On hat I've also cast a spell, the spell of “confused board” Ha!

There are six chances! Six ‘action cards’! Only the correct answer, given by the girl, will cancel the ‘infinite-singing’ spell!

And you should help her well, otherwise I'll cast the spell on you as well.

For a good start I can give you one magic charm. If you use it – you will meet a friend.

Do you want to use my magic charm?

Children: Yes!

Wizard: Full tilt hocus full pelt pocus full tilt full pelt hocus-pocus!

(presenting the Virtuoso)

This is your friend – Virtuoso. One, two, hop, three! *(Virtuoso enters hypnotized)* His special force is “moving with sound”. He has a magic prop: the grand piano. Hop! *(the pianist sits at the piano)*

You can communicate with Virtuoso between the Riddles. If you fail, I will turn you all into pawns in my game! Let's begin!

Virtuoso: *(wakes up)*

Who needs me this time? What's this game? Ah! It's the sing-game! We have to find out what's hidden under the hat! Green action card is a start! Ah!

Miss Rosalie! She is a pawn. Hey, girl, let's start, wake up! *(nothing happens)*

Nothing. The piano will help us now! I'll move her with sound!

(He plays few random notes with right hand and the Girl moves the hand, he plays a few notes with left hand, and Rosalie moves another hand. Then he plays the motif of Time (Czas) and Rosalie turns around, now she faces the audience.)

Virtuoso: First chance! (he reads from the **green action card**):

(or **Wizard (off):**) "The green card moves you on into the space of childhood. Your task is to jump over as many patch-fields as needed to uncover the hidden riddle!"



(Virtuoso starts to play the aria, but suddenly stops, reminded of something.)

Virtuoso: Listen carefully to descriptions and memorize them. If you hear this sound (he plays the victory sound)

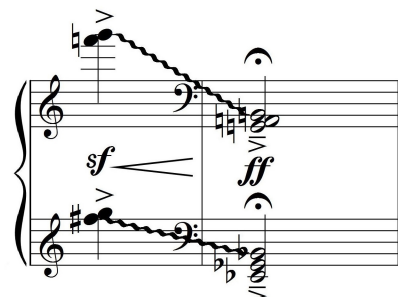
/victory – sound/



...the riddle is solved, and the game is won! But if you hear this sound...
(he plays the error-sound)

... the answer is wrong!
Only if there's still a chance,
you can try to guess again!

/error – sound/



(He begins to play the first aria from top.)

I. Hop Hop

(The whole song is sung blithely, with huge, even exaggerated enthusiasm. On waking up with the sound of piano Rosalie behaves like a little girl.)

Rosalie: (joyfully, energetic, she thinks she is undefeated)

hop hop
on the street
hop hop
on my feet
hop hop
hop hop
hop around

jump on one foot

on one or two
it is vital how you move

over puddles
over patch
all my jumps
are very fast
I can leap
beyond myself
ho ho ho ho
ho ho ho ho
ho ho ho ho
ho ho ho ho
hop around
here and there

(Rosalie uncovers the green patch in the hat with joyful curiosity.)

Mummy, daddy, here!
What is in my hands?
What's this?

(She studies the hidden object, analysis it and ascribes the functions to it, but she clearly associates everything with jumping. She is more and more emotional: enthusiastic, surprised and impatient, but happy, because she likes charades and jumping.)

cable?
liana?
maybe a string?
this pun is very interesting!

hop around
little jump

(everything she would have found she would associate with jumping, therefore she begins the counting-out mindlessly, jumping or pretending to)

hop now
hop about
hop hop we go
hop bound ping skip leap
hop hop we go
jump skip
hop around

(she likes what she does)

hop hop we go
hop bound ping skip leap
hop hop we go
jump skip leap
bound ping
hop jump
skip leap
bound hop

(during the counting-out she starts to think, and through the playing with sounds of words she

realizes the meanings of the words)

leap skip
ping rope

(she is surprised and astonished by her discovery, the name of the object emerged from sounds)

a skipping rope!

(error-sound – in the score)

Virtuoso: *(to children)* So this wasn't the skipping rope.
Like cable, liana, a string?
What could that be? Do you know?

(This is the time for children to give their answer, Virtuoso can play the error-sound if he hears the wrong answers, if he hears the right answer (which is unlikely) he can play the victory-sound, nevertheless it is vital for him to remind children that Rosalie is the one who has to solve the riddle. Guessing shouldn't take too long, after a while Virtuoso can play the Time-motive To avoid the mess Virtuoso should choose few particular kids from the audience (1-3?) and let them guess, and then move on)

Virtuoso: Too bad, the time is running! We now have a second chance!
But which way shall we go? To the yellow, pink or blue patch-field?
Can you help me choose? Please, draw the action-card,
that will determine the direction Rosalie should go!

(Depending on the drawn card, the next song will be either: blue – “Drip, drip”, yellow – “Forest Spirit” or pink – “Night”)

(Blue action-card has been drawn)

Virtuoso: Another chance! *(he reads from the blue action card):*
(or Wizard (off):) “The storm gathers suddenly. Don't let the rain stop you from uncovering the hidden truth!”

II. Drop Drop

(Rosalie feels drops dripping at her. At first the sensations are positive. She's fascinated, she really likes this delicate rain.)

Rosalie:
Drop drop drop drop
drop by drop
Drop drop drop drop
drips of dripping drizzle,
raining, sprinkling
drop, drop, drop,

(the rain increases, and Rosalie becomes disappointed and disgusted that the rain treats her so disgracefully. She stops liking it.)

straight at me.

How can I get rid of drip drip dripping?
rid myself of drizzling rain?

What's that sound? Is it thundering?

(She feels more threatened than only with becoming wet. Outraged and frightened)

Lightning high resounds the sky.
Where the shelter can I find?
It's no longer drizzling, dripping,
but the downpour pouring harmful
pouring rain all over me!

(In increasing haste and impatience she seeks the shelter)

Where, oh, where can shelter be?

(She uncovers the blue patch)

Maybe here?

(She comes down and penetrates the element of the hidden object)

It is dry, it is nice.
What a nice place to hide.
Soft, thin, and wide-stretching,
Wide-stretching and resilient.
Is it a tent? Try again!
Maybe a roof? No! Mistake!
It's an umbrella!

(Error-sound – in the score)

(Rosalie acts as she didn't notice the error-sound, she's so occupied with looking for the shelter)

Under the umbrella I will hide,
I much prefer being dry.

(delayed reaction for the error-sound)

Not umbrella?

(error-sound repeated – in the score)

(Rosalie realizes her mistake, and tries to understand the reason.)

Now the truth unfolds
this umbrella does not fold.
Was umbrella a mistake?

(Astonished, in a complete daze, she turns her back to the audience and freezes in stillness)

Gosh! Something drags me away...

Virtuoso: *(to children)*

Do you remember what described the hidden riddle?
Wide-stretching and resilient? Soft and thin?
That was not an umbrella nor a tent. So what could that be?

(Children again try to guess, the same play with error-sounds and time-motive)

The time is running! Which way should Rosalie go to come closer to the solution of the riddle? Let's draw the next card! The third chance!

/Depending on the drawn card, the next song will be either: blue – “Drip, drip”, yellow – “Forest Spirit” or pink – “Night”/

(Yellow action-card has been drawn:)

Virtuoso: Another chance! *(he reads from the yellow action card):*
*(or Wizard (off):) “You are in a forest clearing. Do not let the forest spirit deceive you.
Remember your task is to recognize the object hidden in the dark!”*

III. Forest Spirit

(Rosalie wakes up and is fascinated with the space she's in. She's infatuated with the charms of nature, a forest idyll. She sings gently.)

Rosalie:

Colorful greenness spilled all over the meadow
sh sh sh
Crowns of the trees gently whispered with the leaves
sh sh sh
brooklet splashed with the fish ish ish
forest echo sounds ceased eased eased

(she listens to the silence)

silence
be all ears

(Careful, but intrigues, as if she couldn't believe)

hear
sounds like a forest spirit
inviting to the woods quietly
come
come

(Surprised with what's happening to her)

Something pulls me into the gloom,
in the dark, straight towards woods!

(Lost, disoriented)

Hey there? Hey there?

It is hard to see in the dark
I can't trust my eyes.
squint squint
squint squint
squint squint

(she hits something hard)

WHACK!

(she uncovers the yellow patch)

Stands petrified

(surprised, carefully touches the hidden element)

What a strange obstacle?
A column? A pole?
Cylindrical and coarse in the forest?

(satisfied with herself)

Quite trivial and obvious!
It's a tree, of course!

(Error-sound – in the score)

(Rosalie clearly has no influence on what's happening to her, involuntarily, submissively, she slowly freezes in stillness)

Too hasty enjoyed success.
In the darkness
I walk backwards
step by step...

Virtuoso: *(to children)*

That would be too simple if that was a tree, don't you think?
It would need to have a wide-spreading crown hidden under the hut.
Cylindrical and coarse, like a column, but not.
We have some more information. What could that be?

(Children again try to guess, the same play with error-sounds and time-motive)

Virtuoso: The time is running! Let's go!!! The next action-card before us!

(He takes the last of the three action cards that were destined for lottery)
(Pink action-card has been drawn:)

Virtuoso: Another chance! *(he reads from the pink action card):*

*(or Wizard (off):) "The ominous darkness arrived. You need to find the way towards the Riddle.
Keep your eyes (ears?) wide open for the clue"*

(adds from himself)

You can even shout your eyes to concentrate better on the words, and not omit the clue!

IV. Night

(Rosalie wakes up and behaves like she was blind, she gropes her way)

Rosalie:

Night, it's night.
When the darkness falls around
one can still be looking hard
in vain.

(Lost, disoriented)

I cannot see a thing.
I move as if I'm in a dream.
Where does the right path begin?

(She sings with growing scare)

Left? Right? Left? Right?
I would love to set off right now!
Right? Left? Left? Right?
Now! Now! Now! Oh! Obstruction!

(She uncovers the pink patch)

I feebly feel something there:
Large, and broad, and corrugated stretch.
Coarse, and cracked, rough, and shriveled,
All dried up, and creased, and wizened,
all wizened, all wrinkled, desiccated...

(Frightened, disbelievingly)

Oh, my! I felt that it was moving!
Oh, my! Almost as if it was breathing!

(Understanding the situation, and the thread. Scared)

Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah!
Terror!
Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh!

(checking again out of curiosity)

It stopped...
It is not what I thought...

(With the smile she tries to uplift herself, convincing herself that was only an illusion.)

It's an error. It's a hole
and inside it

(Multiplying the descriptions is the way of getting more time to find the right word to name the object. She feels that through understanding what it is she can make it less scary)

there's a stiff,
motionless, and desiccated...

(with joy, satisfaction and relief, that she has finally found the right word)

wall!

(Error-sound – in the score)

(Rosalie still tries to answer, as she was talking with the sound of the piano. Panic. She loses the confidence, in scare trying to find the solution. After few more unsuccessful attempts, she distances herself to the situation)

Rock?

(Error-sound – in the score)

(Each failed try makes her weaker, but she fights, doesn't want to give up)

Mountain?

(Error-sound – in the score)

Fence?

(Error-sound – in the score)

Barrier?

(Error-sound – in the score)

(She becomes suspicious)

What's being played? And by whom?

I hear, but I see no one in the gloom!

(With the end of the night and appearing of the light, Rosalie slowly freezes in stillness. Even though she wants very much, she knows, that she will not have enough time to find out what was hidden before her in the dark)

It's so hard to recognize by touch

Easy guessing when one sees the light...

Virtuoso: Large and corrugated stretch, all cracked and coarse, rough, dried up and shriveled, wrinkled, creased and wizened, desiccated... Was it really moving? Or was it just deluding? Any ideas what could that be? So many new clues...

(Children again try to guess, the same play with error-sounds and time-motive)

Virtuoso: There's no time to lose! We've wasted four chances already!

Only two more chances left. Time for the purple patch-field!

*(He reads from the **purple action card**):*

*(or **Wizard (off):**)* The card moves you in the space of household duties! You need to dust everything properly, to uncover the hidden answer! A lot of work and a little time left!

(adds from himself)

Rack your brains to solve the riddle!

V. Atishoo!

(Rosalie after waking up is full of energy and totally engaged. Sneezing does not diminish her active behavior. She can gesticulate vigorously as if she would really complete the tasks she sings about. At the beginning she sings very enthusiastically, cleaning is her passion, the more dust the better. At first she even enjoys sneezing.)

Rosalie:

Atishoo!

It's so dirty all around!

Atishoo!
I can't see a thing through dusty cloud!
I'll scrub every nook and cranny!
I'll chase away all dirty rubbish.
Atishoo!

(Gradually she notices that the task isn't as simple as she thought. Sneezing really makes her work difficult)

It's a treat to wipe the dust-tshioo!,
I need some fresh, clean ra-a-ag!
I will wipe the blinds and floor
I can sweep it too, and more!

(She weakens, her energy and determination is slowly replaced by the awareness of helplessness of the task)

Just be quick, just be fast,
It's not nice to sneeze from dust!
Ah! Atishoo! Atishoo!

(Despite her determination, because of sneezing she is unable to complete the cleaning. This irritates her.)

No! I failed again!

(Resigned, broken down.)

All the work goes down the drain!
I don't want to be a slummock!

(Suspiciously)

My poor eyes, the sandman's coming!
Atishoo!

(She uncovers the purple patch-field)

Just a minute...

(she examines the element hidden under the patch)

What a pipe?
Could it help the things go right?

Oh, how long and strong and pliant,
First keeps still and then twirls round.
Winding, long, strong, meandering,
Could it help me make things tidy?

(Hope and optimism come back to her)

Can it suck the mass of dust in?
Atishoo! Atishoo!

(sneezing is echoed in the piano part)

It is sneezing? Atishoo! Dirty joke!
Swallows nothing, only chokes!

(disappointed)

Such help is not worth a lot!
Cleaning hopelessly I try
with this lousy vacuum pipe! -ipe-ipe-
-atishoo!

(Error-sound – in the score)

(Disappointed, irritated, angry with the nasty game, she can sing the words like cursing)

Pipe is rubbish!

(the word „hole” is for her meaning breakdown)

What a hole!

(Reminding the previous failures)

All the puns are going wro-o-o-ong!
Oh!

(She hears as the piano „completes” her unfinished sneeze. A blast of awareness. She checks what's going on. She pretends to sneeze)

A-a-a...

(She listens to the reactions of the piano. Surprised and disoriented. She notices the clear connection between her sneezing and the piano reactions. She realizes that she has an influence on what's happening. Error-sound makes her freeze in stillness again.)

Virtuoso:

Oh no! Mistake again! Have you noticed? The spell weakens a bit?
Rosalie begins to understand she's being manipulated like a pawn in a game!
Do you know what's hidden under the hat?
Maybe it is a bit like a liana, and wide-spreading, soft and thin at the same time?
And cylindrical and coarse as well? And Large, wrinkled, creased and wizened...
With a sneezing pipe?

(Children answer)

I wonder if you are right?

(he plays the motive of running time)

The last, red patch-field is waiting!!

*(he reads the **red action-card**)*

*(or **Wizard (off):**)* “The card moves you into space of “here and now”.

The time is relentlessly shrinking. You have the last chance to solve the riddle!”

(he adds from himself)

I am afraid to think what will happen to us all if Rosalie won't give the right answer...

VI. Well, I never!

(Rosalie, even though, awoken, behaves as if she still was in a dream. She is not sure of anything at first, like she was surrounded by the dense fog, as if she was in a daze. At the same time she becomes conscious that the situations are repetitive, that she is stuck in some scheme, some weird game, that makes her totally submissive.)

Rosalie:

Feels like I've been here before,
And I opened well known door.

(she uncovers the red patch)

Hard, and smooth and straight...

(she takes back her hand)

Ow! Ouch! Sharp!
It hurts!
Whence this jab?
Stabbing spike?

(puts back the hand into the hole)

It's so large!
Beastly, long-stretching cone...

Hurt by ill-fated stab,
Hand now stings like mad.

(the stab sobers her up and awakens the will to fight and guessing)

Even though, I've never suffered thus
I will solve the riddle asked.

I got twinged only once,
now in my head one word floats around
Word that suits here to a T
so tacitly tantalizes me.

(Hesitating, tired with the situation)

I can't tell the wheat from chaff,
Tush! This pun has tangy husk!
Wait a minute...

(She feels as if the words were flowing out of her by themselves and only after it happens the understanding followed the involuntary singing. She's surprised by this)

A thought arises from this dusk:
Sounds in ordered layout masked.

"Tragic task: tug Tuscan rusk."

(She begins to understand the rule and the word)

All I say is T and ASK
ASK and T, and T and ASK
T and ASK: this sounds like TUSK!

(Error-sound – in the score)
(decided and determined)

Now I'm sure!
I have called that thing the right word!

(Error-sound – in the score)

No, I won't give up this game!
TUSK is a proper name!

(She becomes more aware. She realizes that until the music is sounding she still has a chance to act and to solve the riddle)

I still feel awake and sharp,
Still surrounded by bright sounds!

(She listens carefully, reminding herself of previous similar situations, she begins to grasp the rules)

What's the game?
Why am I singing?

I was guessing things before,
Other holes I have explored.
Skipping rope was on one side,
On the other: a vacuum pipe.

Pipe kept awfully sneezing!
And what sneezes?
Nose, great Jesus!

The umbrella was so spoiled
That impossible to fold.
False umbrella cheated me,
And the tree was not a tree.

I kept puzzling over trivial facts,
But I didn't think enough!

The wall has maybe moved for real,
was it then a living thing?
Creature with a sneezing nose
And protruding tusk! I know!

The skipping rope was a tail.
This clears up the charade!
Pieces have to fit together
into a whole!

(Happy and excited)

I'm not worried anymore!
Let's now connect all I know,
And that's how my answer goes:
Through the holes I touched an animal!

With a tail long as snake,
With a tusk as rhinoceros,
Tall as a horse,
With a very long nose,
As huge as an elephant...
Elephant!
With a tail, and tusk, and trunk!

(she SPEAKS)

What now?
Where's the sound?
Music has stopped – I sing no more.

(She notices the children)

Who are you?

Virtuoso: What a blast! The spell broke at last!

(Rosalie slowly understands that she has solved the riddle, that she was enchanted in the game. She acts as if she has awoken from a long dream)

Rosalie: Well, I never!

Virtuoso: Miss Rosalie...

(Rosalie now remembers her name, her past. Virtuoso takes up the card with the rules of the game, suddenly there something falls out of the game-instructions. It's a letter from a Wizard)

Virtuoso and Rosalie *(read together):* *(or **Wizard** (off:))*

"Knowing the elephant is very hard
When all is hidden but the trunk
Elephant like the world
Consists of multitude
Pieces, patches and scraps,
And becomes the whole
When you know them all!

Wizard"

Rosalie *(to Wizard):* Thank you! *(she admits her faults)* I lived in a wrong belief that I know everything. I never had a patience to explore thoroughly. *(she wonders)* The question is: can one ever know everything? Hallo? *(the Wizard doesn't respond)*
Well, *(to children)*, you better try at least, so you don't end like me! Thank you for help!

Rosalie and Virtuoso laugh. He plays the 'Dance', during which Rosalie takes up the hat (turning the chart on the other side) and uncovers the elephant – the hero of sing-game.

THE END