THE DIAZ FAMILY
TALENT SHOW

A PLAY IN 10 MINUTES

DANE FIGUEROA EDIDI
The Diaz Family Talent Show: a play in 10 minutes

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Aunt Liz
Liza Brown. The surviving elder of the family. She is a jazz singer who continues to tour the world with her husband’s trio. She is as a diva, and certainly serves fun auntie status.

Uncle William
William Brown. Aunt Liz’s husband. A jazz pianist. He is the hippest eldest uncle you could ever know. He always wears suits and sunglasses.

Juanita Cane
The Eldest of the two Diaz sisters. She is bougie and quite frankly doesn’t care who knows it.

Timothy Cane
Juanita’s husband. Straight laced. He can’t sing, or dance, and has zero rhythm but he knows a thing or five thousands about computers.

Belinda Diaz
The youngest of the two Diaz Sisters. She is sassy and while Juanita is ten years older, they have always competed with one another.

Cousin June Bug
Juan Diaz. Dinky’s big cousin. His mother passed away after giving birth to him. He is being raised by Belinda. He was named after his Aunt Juanita. He has a football scholarship and normally is found texting on his phone.

March and April
Dinky’s big cousins around her age. They are slightly older and typically play together ignoring Dinky cause she is four years younger than them.

Dinky
Dora Diaz. Belinda’s daughter. Quiet, reserved, and shy. The only two people who can really get her out of her shell are Aunt Liz and her now deceased Grandmother Rose.
Stage Directions

The voice of the playwright. Although the stage directions don’t need to be read, they of course are their own character, in their own right.

*If this play is being read at home you can always change the suggested songs and maybe place in ones that are more familiar to you and your family.

*April is deaf. So, every time she speaks it is through sign language. Perhaps a good exercise is when it is being read at home is to have the family learn how to sign April’s lines.
(In Baltimore. We are in a house. A beautiful home. One that feels like rest and promise. And dreams. A House that has history in it, a house that was a dream come true for a man from the South and woman from Cuba. There is a stairwell near the front door. And a small hallway that connects to the kitchen and the living room. There are vibrant colors here. Blues. And Whites. And Reds. And golds. The furniture looks like it emerged from the 1970s, although we are clearly not in the 70s at all. There is a large space where a television should be but it has been moved to make room for the family gathering. We hear music. Salsa music. The voice of the Queen of Salsa; Celia Cruz! She is singing “La Vida Es Un Carnival. And we watch Mama Belinda appear. The youngest of the two Diaz Sisters. She always wears a smile and something about her smile illuminates the room. She is dancing, mouthing the words. Soon Cousin Junebug joins her and pretends to be playing the instruments. When their dance is all done. They burst into laughter.)

BELINDA

Junebug
Help your tia move that couch over there.

JUNEBUG

Ti Ti we been prepping for things all day
I need to go upstairs and shower
You know I like to have my cologne on in social settings and I can’t do that till after I take a shower.

BELINDA

Now you know if you come up in here and things ain’t moved by the time your tia Junita come
She and your Uncle Timothy gonna have something to say and then I’ll have to hear how you should live with her for two hours even though we all know she doesn’t even really like kids

JUNEBUG

But she has kids

BELINDA
Well how do you think I know she don’t like em.

(They both burst into laughter. Dinky comes downstairs holding a doll in her hands.)

JUNEBUG

Rugrat
why you still holding that old thing
I brought you a new doll for Kwanazza.

(Dinky smiles and shrugs)

BELINDA

You know that was your Abeula’s favorite doll

(Mama Belinda whispers. Junebug nods with a halfhearted smile.)

Baby
move out the way so Junebug and me can move this couch over there.

(Dinky moves out the way and Mama and Junebug literally move the couch 1 inch over.)

Perfect
Junebug go on upstairs
we can’t have you smelling like football practice
Juana will never let me hear the end of it

(Junebug gives her a look indicating that that is why he was trying to leave sooner but she snaps her fingers and shoos him. She begins to place on Aretha Franklin’s “Chain of fools” and rushes out to the Kitchen. Dinky checks to make sure no one is watching and then begins to dance; and Dinky can dance honey, if anyone knew she had this talent she would surely win the contest but Dinky ain’t much for show. The doorbell rings and Dinky walks towards the door.)

DINKY

Who is it
(Dinky’s voice is soft as if she is attempting not to make any sound above a whisper. The doorbell rings again, apparently no one has heard Dinky’s question on the other. Her mother rushes in.)

**JUANITA**

Chica open this door
I hear you blasting the Queen of Soul in there.

*(Belinda flings open the doors)*

**BELINDA**

**HERMANA**

**JUANITA**

**SISTER**

*(Mama Belinda and Auntie Juanita fling their arms around one another and begin to dance, singing Aretha Franklin’s “Chain of Fool”. Each sister tries to out sing the other. As they Do Uncle Tim comes in with a cake.)*

**DINKY**

Hi Uncle Tim

**UNCLE TIM**

Hey sweetpea

*(He smiles at her and then heads to the kitchen glancing at his wife and his sister in law and shaking his head at the two. Cousins March and April enter)*

**MARCH AND APRIL**

Hi

**DINKY**
Hi

(They hand Dinky a gift. And she thanks them, then closes the door as they run off to play together. The number finishes and the two sisters burst into laughter.)

BELINDA

Oh Juana
Is that a new coat
It’s beautiful

JUANA

I know Timothy brought it for me
He just got a promotion you know
At the firm
Where he works
At the Firm

BELINDA

Yeah gal we all know he works at a firm

JUANA

And he just insisted

BELINDA

Well I am sure the subliminal messages you have been sending him for a year helped

JUANA

They did

MARCH
APRIL
Come say hi to your Aunt
We don’t just come in people’s houses and not say hi

(March and April appear and they say hello to Belinda she returns the greeting and they hug her and then runs off. Dinky comes in to say hello to Aunt Juanita.

DINKY

Hola Tia

(Juanita looks down at Dinky as if she were the most precious thing on earth.)

JUANITA

Oh Dora sweetie
Your Spanish is sounding so much better

(Juanita hugs Dinky as she beams with pride.)

Where that other one at

(Cousin Junebug appears looking fly)

JUNBUG

Hey Auntie

JUANITA

Look at you chile
Looking like he just stepped off of GQ
You clean up well Juan

JUNEBUG

Auntie everybody call me Junebug now

JUANITA
I ain’t calling you that

(He sucks his teeth under his breath but not so low that she doesn’t hear him. She chooses to ignore it though.)

Come on Belinda
I want to show you this beautiful cake I made

BELINDA

But I already made a cake

JUANITA

I know

(The Shade! Aunt Juanita pulls Mama Belinda into the kitchen as Uncle Timothy comes out.)

TIM

Juan
Junebug

JUNEBUG

Hi uncle Tim

TIM

You excited to start school next year

JUNEBUG

Kind of
A little bit nervous but we make do

(They smile at one another. Then there is an awkward silence. Then they both sit down and get on their phones. Soon the door opens and in appears the most glamorous woman who ever did walk the great halls of every play ever written)
DINKY + TIM + JUNEBUG

AUNT LIZ

(This is the most excited we have heard Dinky be all night.)

AUNT LIZ

Yes babies
Auntie is home

(Dinky hugs her. We see uncle William come in with his keyboard.)

Will
let Tim and Junebug help you

WILLIAM

I can do it
I been doing it for over fifty years by myself

AUNT LIZ

Don’t let the patriarchy break your back dear
Boys go on and help your tio

(They grab the keyboard from Uncle William and begin to help him set it up)

BELINDA + JUANITA

TIA LIZ

MARCH + APRIL

AUNT LIZ

AUNT LIZ
Si
Si
Si
Yes
I am here

*(She strikes a pose as if she is having her picture taken on the runway)*

That mean we can get this party started
Junebug run on out to that car and get them gifts I got for everybody

**DINKY**

How was Japan Aunt Liz

**AUNT LIZ**

Brina
They had me in beautiful hotel
We played for all sorts of people
And one of the businessmen who had us play for his Tech party took us out to
evening with a Geisha
Honey them girls got all them robes on but move like they floating
And they dance
They taught me some moves and you know auntie had to add her own flares

*(She gets up and begins dancing but adds her own infamous wiggles and shakes. Everyone claps)*

I wasn’t trying to be disrespectful
I just wanted to do a little cultural exchange
I taught her some of our traditional dances too
Those Divas work hard

*(Junebug brings in the gifts. They sit down around Aunt Liz like she is the Queen and they are royal family. Ms. Thang is holding court. Junebug hands her the first box. She hands it to the twins. They rip it open. It’s a new game.)*

We were able to get y’all this latest game before it was released
JUANITA

What do we say

MARCH + APRIL

Thank you Aunt Liz

AUNT LIZ

Now go on I know yall don’t feel like staying here

(They run away. She smiles. Then she gets Junebug and Uncle Tim their gifts. They open them. For Tim it is a new tech gadget from Japan which he had been wanting to get but couldn’t and for Junebug an unreleased album by one of his favorite K Pop groups. Junebug tries to hide his excitement.)

UNCLE TIM + JUNEBUG

Thank you Aunt Liz

(She then hands Mama Belinda her gift and Tia Juanita. They open them and both squeal like they would have if they were children. For Mama. She has received a beautiful porcelain doll with a Kimono that has an intricate design. Mama Belinda collects dolls from around the world. And Aunt Juanita receives a shimmering kimono that reflects lights. When she wears this she really will be the brightest person in the room.)

BELINDA + JUANITA

Gracias Auntie

(Dinky looks sad. But Aunt Liz takes her to the kitchen and hands her her gift. Dinky smiles and then opens it up. It’s a microphone.)

AUNT LIZ

Your mother told me your teacher wanted you to sing the solo at school but you said no
I know you have an amazing voice
Why are you so scared

**DINKY**

I don’t know

**AUNT LIZ**

You haven’t sang since your abuela passed away

*(Dinky looks down)*

Oh

Sweetie

**DINKY**

It just

Feels like

That was my thing

With her

And

Mmm

If I sing for people

With other people

I am betraying her

**AUNT LIZ**

Oh sweetie

Mi hermana always dreamt of being a big singer

When our mother brought her here from Cuba she always dreamed of being like La Lupe or Celia Cruz
But life had other plans for her
She was content though
And when she passed she had lived a healthy and full life

I can remember that when you showed her you had the same gift as us
She believed
Like with me
she could mold you into a great singer
She was teaching you the art of music not to keep the gift to yourself
Or to have it perish in the grave
But so that it may open many doors for you
As it had for me

Look at your auntie
As they would say “Born in the ghettos of Baltimore”
And she was just singing in Japan
Maybe that isn’t your dream
Maybe it was only mine and your abuelas
But baby girl you have the gift of stars and song
Just like your abuela
Just like me

(Dinky smiles)

ALRIGHT EVERYBODY
Lets get this contest started

(Dinky sits there pondering. It is true she hasn’t sung since her grandmother passed and something about the notion of singing again... perhaps isn’t about a feeling of betrayal but a feeling of sadness she hasn’t quite been able to work through.)

(Aunt Liz and Uncle Will perform Billy Strayhorn and Duke Ellington’s “Satin Doll”, wiggling and jiggling she parades around, mic in hand causing the family to grin in awe. Then she introduces Tia Juana and Uncle Will who sing Elton John and Ki Ki Dee’s “Don’t Go Breaking My Heart”. They are clearly in love, but he obviously never wanted to sing this song, even if he doesn’t mind singing with her. And besides Uncle Tim can’t sing, and I mean can’t. Then there is March and April who sing “Peanut Butter Jelly Time” and give you an impressive dance routine. Then, Junebug who may know how to tackle on the football field but also
knows how to sing. And I mean SANG! He sings Tevin Campbell’s “Can We Talk” and honey he serves riffs, runs, ornamentations and notes for days. Then Mama Belinda gets up and she sings La Lupe’s “Teatro”, bringing tears to Tia Juanita’s eyes because they know about men doing them wrong honey. And then finally everyone looks at Dinky who has been so enraptured by everyone’s performances she couldn’t fathom she would have to sing. Dinky stares at them, wanting to sing, truly, but feeling too sad too.)

**JUNEBUG**

You can sing your tears if you want

**MARCH + APRIL**

Yeah Dinky

**BELINDA**

Or you’re hopes

**UNCLE TIM**

There is nothing wrong with hoping

**JUANITA**

Even in the midst of your sadness

**AUNT LIZ**

Or you don’t have to sing at all if you’re not ready

*(Dinky shakes her head and runs away. And everyone frowns but they understand. They have all known a heap of sadness since Abuela Rose has passed. But they begin to sing Stevie Wonder’s “Loves In Need of Love Today.” As they sing their voices rise upstairs. Dinky knows this was one of her abuela’s favorite songs. And as she listens, something in her heart moves and she can feel her grandmother’s arms around her and her voice sweet like honey, strong like hope filling the room. And she begins to sing, and her voice emerging from her throat causes her body to move, her feet go down the steps as everyone sways and sings. And her voice*
joining theirs spins around them, and she knows the support of their voices as the song feels as if it were transitioning. And her aunt with a smile places the mic in Dinky's hand who with one hand holds the doll and the other holds the mic, and Uncle Will begins to play “Somewhere Over the Rainbow” and “Home” both of these songs were her Abuela Rose’s favorite. And Dinky begins to sing. Her voice stirring tears, invoking hope, and bringing smiles to their face. When she sings it feels as if the Heavens open and her grandmother smiles down. When she finishes, the family rises to their feet with thunderous applause and Dinky smiles, tears coming to her eyes, the sadness breaking, transforming into hope. They crown her the winner.

(Tomorrow will be another battle perhaps, another moment to learn joy, another moment to move through sadness into something else, a moment, perhaps, to learn to hold both.)

(Lights Out)