

YELLOW ROSE

A musical in two acts

Music and lyrics by Paul Vincent Gandolfi and Terry Allen Langfitt
Book and additional lyrics by Sarah Lawrence

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

Cast 22-26. 18 roles listed below plus extra ensemble roles TBD
3 Black Females, 4 Black Males, 2 Latiné Females, 3 Latiné Males,
1 White Female, 4 White Males plus extra ensemble roles TBD

EMILY WEST, 20, female-identifying, light-skinned biracial (Black/White), formerly enslaved. Bold, fierce, headstrong, independent.

Vocal range: Alto Ab3-E5

SANTA ANNA, 41, male-identifying, Mexican/Latine, President of Mexico and leader of the Mexican army. Short of stature--the "Napoleon of the West," cultured, narcissistic, eccentric, bloodthirsty, womanizer, genius.

Vocal range: Baritone F2-G4

LEVI GATES, 28, Black, male-identifying, noble and intelligent dock foreman, incurable romantic, walks with a limp from a dock accident.

Vocal range: Baritone F2-G4

JAMES MORGAN, 48, White, male-identifying, visionary Texian colonist.

Vocal range: Baritone F2-G4

CELIA MORGAN, 45, White, female-identifying, wife of James, savvy & practical.

Vocal range: Alto Ab3-C5

JOSÉ TORNEL, 40, male-identifying, Mexican/Latine of Spanish descent, Santa Anna's aide-de-camp & Minister of War.

Closeted gay man, probably in love with his boss.

Vocal range: Tenor

MAJOR GEORGE HOCKLEY, 33, White, male-identifying, arrogant officer in Texian army. Also plays Jamie.

Vocal range: Tenor

REV. SIMEON JOCELYN, 58, White, male-identifying, fiery Abolitionist preacher Vocal range: Bass. Also plays Dickie, Texian Man 2, Texian Soldier 2.

REV. DR. JAMES PENNINGTON, 28, Black, male-identifying, formerly enslaved, gifted orator and preacher.

Vocal range: Baritone. Also plays Mexican Soldier 2 (1 line), Joe, and Black Man 2.

DOÑA MARIA DE SAN CRISTOBAL, 50s-70s, female-identifying, Mexican/Latine of Spanish descent, head of a proud Spanish family, original Mexican settlers. Regal and imperious bearing.

Vocal range: Alto. Also plays Mexican Woman 2.

Ensemble Roles

Ensemble 1: 20s-30s, male-identifying, Mexican/Latine. Plays Cardinal, Mexican Man 1, Mexican Soldier. Vocal range: Tenor

Ensemble 2: 20s-30s, female-identifying, Mexican/Latine. Plays Mexican Woman 1. Vocal range: Soprano

Ensemble 3: 20-30s, female-identifying, Black. Plays Betty, Black Woman 1. Vocal range: Alto.

Ensemble 4: 20s-30s, female-identifying, Black. Plays Sally, Black Woman 2. Vocal range: Alto

Ensemble 5: 50+, male-identifying, Black. Plays William. Vocal range: low bass

Ensemble 6: 30s, male-identifying, Black. Plays Ray, Black Man 1. Vocal range: Baritone.

Ensemble 7: 20s-30s, male-identifying, White. Plays Tom, Texian Man 1, White Male 1, White Soldier 1. Vocal range: either baritone or tenor.

Other Roles TBD to fill out song/dance ensembles.

Yellow Rose Song List © 2024

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6.	Women, Women	Santa Anna & Tornel duo	16-18
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7.	Thrive	Emily solo + Male ensemble	24-26
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PRODUCTION NOTES

The story takes place before and during the Texas War of Independence in 1835-1836. Each scene should easily transition to indicate location: the Dixwell Church in Connecticut, the New Washington Settlement in east Tejas, the President's Palace in Mexico City, the Goliad battlefield, and a jail cell in San Antonio.

ACT I

NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT. DIXWELL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, 1835.

AT RISE: A worship service at the first Black congregation in Connecticut. EMILY WEST plays a spirited gospel hymn on an old piano. The BLACK CHOIR files in, including LEVI GATES. Two ministers enter: fiery White abolitionist SIMEON JOCELYN and Black REVEREND DR. JAMES PENNINGTON. Emily leads the choir from the piano.

CHOIR AND EMILY

1. "SONG OF FREEDOM"

THIS IS OUR SONG OF FREEDOM
WE CHOOSE OUR DESTINY
COME JOIN OUR SONG OF FREEDOM
SING OUT FOR YOU AND ME

CHOIR

THIS IS OUR SONG OF FREEDOM
WE CHOOSE OUR DESTINY
COME JOIN OUR SONG OF FREEDOM
Amen!
SING OUT FOR YOU AND ME

HALLELUJAH

REV. JAMES PENNINGTON

Hear these words, brothers and sisters, from our beloved Paul's letter to the Galatians: "Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by the yoke of slavery. It is for freedom that Christ has set us free."

CHOIR (CONT'D)

THIS IS OUR SONG OF FREEDOM
HALLELUJAH
WE CHOOSE OUR DESTINY
HALLELUJAH
COME JOIN OUR SONG OF FREEDOM
HALLELUJAH

REV. SIMEON JOCELYN

I will not rest until we see the evils of slavery vanquished in our land. From the injustice I see on these streets of Connecticut to the bondage of every plantation across the South.

CHOIR (CONT'D)

SING OUT FOR YOU AND ME

REV. JAMES PENNINGTON

Heed the truth, brothers and sisters. None of us can be free until all of us are free.

EMILY WEST

I HEAR THE SONG THEY'RE SINGING
BUT AM I REALLY FREE?
DRAPED IN THE SKIN OF DIFFERENCE
IS THERE A LIFE FOR ME?

I KNOW I SHOULD BE HAPPY
BUT I JUST WANT TO LEAVE
I'M CRIPPLED BY THIS FEELING
WHEN I KNOW I SHOULD BELIEVE

CHOIR AND EMILY
THIS IS OUR SONG OF FREEDOM
WE CHOOSE OUR DESTINY ALLELU
COME JOIN OUR SONG OF FREEDOM ALLELU
SING OUT FOR YOU AND ME

MEXICO CITY, MEXICO. PRESIDENTIAL PALACE. SAME TIME.

PRESIDENT SANTA ANNA presides over
a meeting with JOSÉ TORNEL and the
MEXICAN CARDINAL. A GROUP OF
MEXICANS stand outside with signs.

CARDINAL
No more of these wretched American immigrants
flooding over our borders into our beloved Mexico.

TORNEL
They poison the minds of our people. And now they
have guns, cannons.

CARDINAL
They defy the law, they deny the Pope himself!

TORNEL
Government after government have failed to act.

CARDINAL
Law and order, now! Do something, Presidente.

SANTA ANNA
I CAN'T IGNORE MY PEOPLE
I MUST RESTORE THE LAW
Twenty presidents in twenty years!

JOSÉ TORNEL
AND YOU'LL BE GREATER THAN THEM ALL

SANTA ANNA
THERE'LL BE NO MORE GUNS AND NO MILITIAS
WE SWEAR ALLEGIANCE TO THE POPE
NO MORE IMMIGRANTS AND NO SLAVERY
THIS WILL GIVE MY PEOPLE HOPE

TORNEL & CARDINAL
HALLELUJAH HALLELUJAH

CARDINAL
Listen to the people, Presidente.

MEXICAN ENSEMBLE

SANTA ANNA EL PRESIDENTE
SANTA ANNA EL PRESIDENTE

THIS IS OUR SONG OF FREEDOM EL PRESIDENTE
WE CHOOSE OUR DESTINY HALLELUJAH

MEXICAN ENSEMBLE SANTA ANNA
TORNEL CARDINAL

COME JOIN OUR SONG OF FREEDOM HALLELUJAH
SING OUT FOR YOU AND ME

NEW WASHINGTON SETTLEMENT, GALVESTON BAY, SAME TIME.

MUSIC CONTINUES as JAMES MORGAN
fronts a group of TEXIAN SETTLERS.
CELIA MORGAN hands him Santa
Anna's Presidential Decree.

JAMES MORGAN

No more slavery! Santa Anna's abolished slavery
across all of Mexico. All of Texas!

CELIA MORGAN

Praise the Lord, an enlightened man.

JAMES MORGAN

This is what we've dreamed of, Celia. A government
guarantee, everyone in Mexico can now live free.
IMAGINE A WORLD
WHERE THE TRUTH IS UNBRIDLED
AND PEOPLE ARE PEOPLE
THAT THEY'RE BORN TO BE
WHERE DREAMS ARE UNFETTERED
UNFILTERED UNSTIFLED
AND WE MAKE THE HISTORY OF WE

TEXIAN #1

We're with you, Captain!

JAMES MORGAN

I LIVE FOR THE CHANCE
TO BE PART OF THE TALE
THAT'S TOLD OVER AND OVER AGAIN

TEXIAN #2

Count me in!

JAMES MORGAN

THE SPARK FOR THE FIRE
THE WIND FOR THE SAIL
THAT TAKES US WHERE WE'VE NEVER BEEN
Who's with me now?

TEXIANS

We are!

ALL

THIS IS OUR SONG OF FREEDOM
WE CHOOSE OUR DESTINY
HALLELUJAH

WHITE ENSEMBLE

COME JOIN OUR SONG OF FREEDOM
HALLELUJAH
SING OUT FOR YOU AND ME

ALL

THIS IS OUR SONG OF FREEDOM
WE CHOOSE OUR DESTINY HALLELUJAH
COME JOIN OUR SONG OF FREEDOM HALLELUJAH
SING OUT FOR YOU AND ME

MUSIC FADES. Cast exits.

DIXWELL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, SAME TIME.

After the worship service, Emily,
Levi and two Black Women hang
back. Levi walks with a limp,
aided by a cane.

LEVI GATES

Miss Emily, you sure did play sweetly this morning.

BLACK WOMAN #1

(mocking)

Oh, Miz Emily, you sure did play sweetly this
morning.

BLACK WOMAN #2

Levi Gates, that gal don't belong around here.

BLACK WOMAN #1

Best stick to your own kind.

EMILY WEST

My, my! You may be dressed all church-like, but you
need a mouth to match.

LEVI GATES

Pay no mind, Emily.

EMILY WEST

I have just as much right to be here as they do.

LEVI GATES

She's right, ladies.

BLACK WOMAN #2

That's the problem. Little Miss Know-It-All here thinks she's better'n us. Better'n everybody.

BLACK WOMAN #1

Levi, wake up! This little gal's nothing but trouble.

EMILY WEST

May the Good Lord heap blessings on your day too, ladies.

BLACK WOMAN #2

Don't say we didn't warn you!

The Two Women exit in a huff.

EMILY WEST

That's what everyone thinks. I don't belong.

LEVI GATES

Not everyone.

EMILY WEST

Levi, the answer's still no. I will not marry you.

LEVI GATES

Emily, I'm dock foreman now. Pay's good. New Haven's a great place to raise a family.

(taps cane)

Is it this?

EMILY WEST

Of course not. You wouldn't understand.

LEVI GATES

Wouldn't understand you? I was standing right here when they dropped you off on the front steps, just some skinny runt, didn't know up from down. I watched you grow up. I was your friend. Sometimes your only friend.

EMILY WEST

And I'm grateful, you know that. But I have to sort some things out on my own.

LEVI GATES

When you're done "sorting things out," you let me know.

Levi limps off, head held high.
Emily walks to the piano, plinks a few notes of "Song of Freedom."

EMILY WEST

Freedom.

(plunks a few more notes, then steps away)

Lord, I can't shut my eyes, can't find any peace.

2. "ANYWHERE BUT HERE"

LORD I WANT TO RUN AWAY
FROM MYSELF, FROM MY PAST
FROM THESE NIGHTMARES EVERY DAY
I DON'T FIT IN ANYWAY

I'M TOO DARK, I'M TOO LIGHT
I'M TOO DIFFERENT SO THEY SAY
I KNOW THAT MOVING FORWARD
WILL HELP ME TO FORGET
IT'S TIME I BREAK MY
CHAINS OF ANGER AND REGRET AND BE

ANYWHERE BUT HERE
I WANT A NEW BEGINNING
I WANT TO DISAPPEAR AND BE
ANYWHERE BUT HERE

I'VE STAYED MUCH TOO LONG
IT'S TIME THAT I MOVE ON
TO ANYWHERE, ANYWHERE BUT HERE

I NEED TO FIND MY WAY
TO FREEDOM, TO BELONGING
TO A PLACE I WANT TO STAY
AND I NEED TO HAVE A SAY
ABOUT MY FUTURE, MY PATHWAY
AND THE CHOICES I CAN MAKE

I'LL HAVE A BETTER LIFE
THAN THE ONE THAT I'VE BEEN SHOWN
I'LL LEAVE THIS PLACE BEHIND
AND FIND ONE OF MY OWN
AND BE ANYWHERE BUT HERE

I WANT A NEW BEGINNING
I WANT TO DISAPPEAR AND BE
ANYWHERE BUT HERE

I'VE STAYED MUCH TOO LONG
IT'S TIME THAT I MOVE ON
TO ANYWHERE, ANYWHERE BUT HERE

I WANT A NEW BEGINNING
I WANT TO DISAPPEAR AND BE
ANYWHERE BUT HERE

I'VE STAYED HERE MUCH TOO LONG
IT'S TIME THAT I MOVE ON

TO ANYWHERE, TO ANYWHERE BUT HERE

WOAH, TO ANYWHERE BUT HERE
YEAH, MMM, TO ANYWHERE
TO ANYWHERE BUT HERE

She falls to her knees, prays
silently. Jocelyn and Pennington
enter, not seeing her.

REV. SIMEON JOCELYN

I feel good about leaving the church in your hands,
James. It's long past time we found a Negro pastor
to lead this congregation.

REV. DR. JAMES PENNINGTON

I have big boots to fill, Sir. I'm humbled by your
faith in me.

REV. SIMEON JOCELYN

There's just one thing left undone. I wouldn't feel
right about leaving until I see you settled down.

REV. DR. JAMES PENNINGTON

Marriage?

REV. SIMEON JOCELYN

It's unseemly for a bachelor to lead a
congregation.

REV. DR. JAMES PENNINGTON

I'm perfectly capable--

REV. SIMEON JOCELYN

Hear me out. Emily West is the most gifted young
woman to ever come through our school. She excels
in math, literature, and her voice! Like an angel.
She would be a real asset to your ministry.

REV. DR. JAMES PENNINGTON

She's obviously a gifted musician. But haven't you
raised her to be a bit too presumptuous?

REV. SIMEON JOCELYN

She does speak her mind. She's young. She just
needs the right person to help mold--

REV. DR. JAMES PENNINGTON

Simeon, I'll be frank. Her parentage. Her father, a
plantation owner, her mother a slave.

REV. SIMEON JOCELYN

There's no shame in that! You were born a slave.

REV. DR. JAMES PENNINGTON

I've spent ten years of my life trying to convince society I'm not a freak of nature. A person of color who can actually think, and speak of God, no less? Now you want to saddle me with her? Emily West is a high yellow girl. Whatever she does, all the credit will go to her father. Her white father.

EMILY WEST

(springs up from behind the piano)

How dare you! Judge not, lest ye be judged!

REV. DR. JAMES PENNINGTON

She does know her Bible!

REV. SIMEON JOCELYN

Show some respect for Dr. Pennington.

EMILY WEST

He doesn't show any respect for me.

REV. DR. JAMES PENNINGTON

You see?

EMILY WEST

(to Pennington)

Seems my skin is too light to suit your purpose,

(to Jocelyn)

and too dark to suit yours.

REV. SIMEON JOCELYN

I apologize, James. Youthful folly! She'll grow out of it.

REV. DR. JAMES PENNINGTON

Let's hope it's sooner rather than later.

REV. SIMEON JOCELYN

Emily, I raised you with better manners than that!

EMILY WEST

With all due respect.

(sardonic curtsey)

Gentlemen!

PRESIDENTIAL PALACE, MEXICO CITY, SAME TIME.

Faint "Song of Freedom" comes through the window. Tornel paces. Santa Anna sits at his desk, stamping official papers in utter boredom.

JOSÉ TORNEL

They continue to march, Presidente.

SANTA ANNA

What do my people demand now?

JOSÉ TORNEL

They carry signs.

(looks out window)

"Law and order." "Peace now."

SANTA ANNA

What could they possibly know of peace? Or me, the president of a great nation, burdened with this idiotic paperwork?

JOSÉ TORNEL

Doña Maria continues to wait outside. She grows impatient.

SANTA ANNA

Show her in. And then in five minutes, interrupt us and show her out.

Tornel bows, walks to the door and opens it.

JOSÉ TORNEL

Doña Maria, head of the venerated San Cristóbal family.

Doña Maria enters. Awkward pause.

JOSÉ TORNEL (CONT'D)
(loud whisper)

Protocol!

DOÑA MARIA

I do not bow to this one. I knew him when he was a snivel-nosed boy with nasty habits. Clearly, time has taught him nothing.

Tornel bows and exits.

SANTA ANNA

Felicitations, Doña Maria.

DOÑA MARIA

Felicitations? You killed my husband.

SANTA ANNA

I kill many husbands. Some women are grateful.

DOÑA MARIA

Perhaps you forget who put you in power. The family is reconsidering their support. Your ambition, Presidente, will drive this country to ruin. One bloody battle after another. The bloodshed must stop.

SANTA ANNA

I will not stop until Mexico becomes the most powerful nation on earth. The people demand nothing less. The problem with you and your family is that you lack vision.

DOÑA MARIA

Vision? This is my vision. For you. For your children. On the graves of all my holy ancestors, I curse you, Santa Anna. I curse you! You will become the most hated man in all of Mexico.

SANTA ANNA

Get out of my sight.

DOÑA MARIA

You will live to see the day when people spit on you in the streets. You will die in poverty, in squalor. Your descendants will roam the earth like ghosts. Your legacy will be nothing but shame.

SANTA ANNA

Get out! Witch!

He heaves the bronze bust from his desk at her as she exits. Tornel scurries in. Santa Anna returns to his chair, picks up a pen, examines documents. Tornel picks up the bust, puts it back on desk.

JOSÉ TORNEL

Presidente, you look pale. What did she want this time?

SANTA ANNA

It is of no consequence. But the good woman needs a vacation. Yes! Put her and her entire craven litter on a boat to Spain. Before nightfall.

(throws pen at desk, rises)

3. "THE WARRIOR IN ME"

THESE POLITICS BORE ME
STRAIGHT DOWN TO MY CORE
I'M A MAN OF ADVENTURE
A DISCIPLE OF WAR

IT'S A SWORD THAT I WIELD
NOT THIS PEN IN MY HAND
I LEAD ON THE FIELD
I LIVE TO COMMAND

I NEED SOME ADVENTURE
A FORWARD CAMPAIGN
IF I SIGN ONE MORE PARCHMENT
I MIGHT GO INSANE

IF I STAY HERE MUCH LONGER
 I JUST MIGHT EXPLODE
 I NEED SOME EXCITEMENT
 TO LIGHTEN THE LOAD

CAN'T YOU SEE?

THIS IS THE WARRIOR IN ME
 THIS IS THE WARRIOR IN ME
 THIS IS THE WARRIOR IN ME
 I AM A WARRIOR

THIS THIS THIS IS THE WARRIOR IN ME
 YES THIS IS THE WARRIOR IN ME

NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT. THE DOCKS, TWO WEEKS LATER.

WHITE ENSEMBLE enters: Morgan's
 tipsy sailing crew and women
 they've picked up on the docks.
 BLACK ENSEMBLE strolls in from the
 other side, wearing Sunday best.

Sailors carry in a podium and a
 sign: "FREE LAND! Texas settlers
 needed." Captain James Morgan
 dashes in and leaps onto the
 podium.

JAMES MORGAN

Friends, the name's James Morgan, captain of the
 vessel Flash o'er yonder. I sailed clear to New
 Haven all the way from Texas to offer you the
 opportunity of a lifetime. Free land, and a job in
 the most glorious spot on earth. I'm looking for
 good, honest workers to sail back with me to Texas.

LEVI GATES

Last time a white man loaded our people on a boat,
 we wound up in chains!

JAMES MORGAN

Hold on a minute. Your United States still allows
 the evils of slavery. But not Texas! We're part of
 Mexico, and our government has abolished slavery,
 100%. Why not live in a country where all men live
 free? I offer top wages, regardless of the color of
 your skin. A year of your labor is worth \$100 in
 gold coins!

Morgan jingles a bag of coins. The
 Crowd GASPS.

BLACK MAN #2

Levi, that's twice what we earn on the docks!

Crowd murmurs and nods.

JAMES MORGAN

Ask yourselves. Don't you want a better future? For you? For your family?

JAMES MORGAN AND WHITE ENSEMBLE

4. "EVERYTHING'S BETTER IN TEXAS"

EVERYTHING'S BETTER IN TEXAS
EVERYTHING YOU'VE HEARD IS REALLY TRUE
YES, EVERYTHING'S BETTER IN TEXAS
AND EVERYTHING IS WAITIN' THERE FOR YOU

WON'T YOU COME ON DOWN, TAKE A LOOK AROUND
YOU'RE AS WELCOME AS YOU CAN BE
JUMP ON BOARD, WHAT YA WAITIN' FOR
LET'S SET OUT ON THE SEA

WE'LL CHASE THIS DREAM TOGETHER
SIDE BY SIDE BY SIDE
NOTHING'S GONNA STOP US
CAN YOU FEEL MY TEXAS PRIDE
Yes!

EVERYTHING'S BETTER IN TEXAS
EVERYTHING YOU'VE HEARD IS REALLY TRUE
YOUR FUTURE IS BRIGHTER IN TEXAS
AND ALL OF IT'S JUST WAITIN' THERE FOR YOU

WHITE MALE #1

WE'VE GOT MILES AND MILES OF PRAIRIES
WE'VE GOT VALLEYS OH SO GREEN

WHITE MALE #2

OUR BLUE SKIES STRETCH FOREVER
WE'VE GOT STARS YOU'VE NEVER SEEN

WHITE MALE #1

WE'VE GOT SUNSHINE IN THE WINTER
TO CHASE AWAY YOUR CHILLS

JAMES MORGAN

WE'VE GOT LONGHORN ON THE PRAIRIES
AND TREASURE IN THE HILLS

JAMES MORGAN AND WHITE ENSEMBLE

YES WE'VE GOT A LAND OF PLENTY
TO RAISE YOUR FAMILY
AND IF THAT'S THE DREAM YOU'RE CHASING
THEN COME ALONG WITH ME

JAMES MORGAN

To Texas!

Dance break: White and Black
Ensembles show each other up.