

## MAIN CHARACTERS

**Doña Bonifacia Reyes**, proprietress of the Cannon Club and renowned astrologer [dramatic soprano]

**Carlos de Rivero y Ramon y Gutierrez** the Governor of Puerto Rico [baritone/actor]

**Lucia Vizcarrondo**, Bonifacia's goddaughter and sculptress of the Cannon Club [lyrical soprano]

**Antoine Dabon**, impoverished émigré from France desperately in love with Lucia [tenor]

## THE PLOT

For the first time in a lifetime, the doors of the Cannon Club have opened. A select audience meets Doña Bonifacia, the club's ageless proprietress whose ability to read the stars is met only by her power to summon the ghosts of the past. She conjures a sleepy spring in 1797 when San Juan stared down the might of the British Empire, with the Cannon Club in the center of the action. The superstitious Governor refuses to heed warnings of a coming invasion, convinced that his star chart promises peace. It falls to the young Lucia and her love-sick admirer Antoine to devise a plan to convince him that there is more to life than superstition – and that he must organize a militia to defend the island. However, even as Lucia struggles to persuade the governor that the future is not written in the stars, she battles her own superstition. She is convinced that, like her mother and grandmother, the moment she opens her heart to love, she will turn to stone. Such is the curse of *la familia de piedra*. As Lucia and Antoine work to convince the governor, they fall impossibly in love. Thus, Lucia is forced to face her greatest fear while the people of Puerto Rico face theirs – the prospect of imminent invasion.

### Act 1

Doña Bonifacia summons the ghosts of 1797. Governor arrives at the Cannon Club and implores the Doña to read his stars. She assures him, as she has a hundred times, that there is nothing but peace in the island's future. Meanwhile, Antoine courts Lucia. Every month, he tries a new profession hoping to win her heart, but she refuses his advances. Just then, a seaman rushes in to alert the Governor that the British have taken Trinidad and are rumored to be en route to Puerto Rico to invade. The Governor says the rumor must be wrong. After all, the Doña just read his stars and assured him that the island's future would be peaceful. Bonifacia is horrified, realizing that the only way to spur the Governor to action is to somehow change the stars.

### Act 2

The Governor holds court with Cannon Club guests, trying his hand – incompetently – at telling their futures. Meanwhile, Lucia steals the Governor's glasses while Antoine flashes lanterns across a balcony. The Governor is spooked by the blurry lights and terrified when Bonifacia reveals that, like history's greatest generals, he is witnessing a celestial omen. The "omen" reveals that the island is in danger of invasion and commands the Governor to form a militia. Believing he's been touched by providence, he agrees. Antoine volunteers to lead the militia – after all, he has worked as every profession on the island and can assemble soldiers. He also volunteers to man Castillo Cristobal – the island's fort. Afterward, Antoine and Bonifacia rejoice. But Lucia is petrified – Antoine is no soldier. If he is in Castillo Cristobal, he is certain to die. Antoine tells Lucia she has no reason to fear – among his many jobs, he helped lay Cristobal's stones and placed a lock of her hair in its mortar. There is no stone in all of San Juan stronger than *la familia de la piedra*. The fortress will stand.

### Act 3

Silence falls as the island waits for the first signs of the British fleet. Antoine finds Lucia and tells her that he is taking up his post in Cristobal. They share a moment – she loves him but dares not reveal it. She must believe there is something in the ugliness of her family's curse that will protect him. Antoine leaves and Lucia decides that she is not going to stay within the Cannon Club while he fights. Remembering that they used lanterns to fool the Governor, she rushes off. The British arrive and the island erupts in chaos. In the din of war, shells strike Cristobal and Antoine is cast into darkness. As if in a dream, he is surrounded by lanterns – constellations that lift him out of battle. The battle fades and we hear balladeer singing – San Juan stands! What's more, Antoine survived. The British had nearly broken the island's ranks when they saw a thousand soldiers stretched across the beach. Realizing they lacked the troops to subdue such a force, the British retreated. The soldiers, in fact, were Lucia and the island's women marching with lanterns ablaze. As the island celebrates, Lucia embraces Antoine, having learned that if we do not like the stories our stars tell, we simply must move the stars.