

# "THUMPERS"

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FADE IN:

EXT. SCOTTS' HOUSE - DAY

SUPER: SIOUX FALLS, SD, 7-1-1984

This post-World War 1 house near downtown features grass that doesn't look green enough to be grass.

In the backyard, BEVERLEY SCOTT (38, talkative), her husband JOE BOB SCOTT (42, introverted), and their daughter SENATOBIA MARIE "TOBEY" SCOTT (15, dogged) sit on lounge chairs.

All three Scotts are Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders.

And they're dressed to beat this July heat.

Beverley knits a scarf while she eyeballs Joe Bob, who reads the city's paper, the "Argus Leader."

BEVERLEY

Joe Bob...why don't we have a party?

Joe Bob looks up at Beverley.

JOE BOB

A what?

BEVERLEY

Joe Bob, I said "a party." What do you think?

JOE BOB

I think knittin' a wool scarf on a hot July day done got you under the influence.

BEVERLEY

It'll just be a small party...

JOE BOB

How come? To celebrate the heat?

Joe Bob offers the "Argus Leader's" sports section to Tobey, who takes it while Joe Bob returns to reading the newspaper's other sections.

BEVERLEY

How about a party just to have one?

JOE BOB

That's no reason. And besides, they cost a whole lot of dough.

(MORE)

JOE BOB(CONT'D)

Gimme somethin' to celebrate, then  
I'll party.

Beverley looks at Tobey, then at Joe Bob.

BEVERLEY

How about a party to celebrate  
Tobey's band?

Joe Bob looks up from his newspaper.

JOE BOB

I'm already celebratin' Tobey's  
band.

(wipes his forehead)

She's supposed to celebrate by  
mowin' lawns and babysittin' and  
payin' me off for that old-  
fashioned upright I got her at the  
garage sale at Forty-Fifth and  
Cathy.

BEVERLEY

She'll get jobs when people hear  
how good she is...and that's all  
she needs. We could have Vicki and  
Charlie and Dianne and Mark  
and...well, the whole neighborhood!

JOE BOB

And how 'bout invitin' Michael  
Jackson and Brooke Shields and Joan  
Collins?

(wipes forehead again)

What am I sayin'? Who's gonna wanna  
see a ragtime band? Here in Sioux  
Falls?

TOBEY

We can invite Lucianna's and Jody's  
folks--

BEVERLEY

Tobeeey!

Tobey looks amused.

BEVERLEY (CONT'D)

We could get some ribs and put 'em  
on the grill.

TOBEY

Hamburgers, hot dogs...

BEVERLEY

Tobeeeeeey!

(sets knitting aside)

In the back, Joe Bob. Right here,  
nothing fancy...IT'S NOT LIKE  
BARBARA MANDRELL CAME TO TOWN!

JOE BOB

Quit yellin', Beverley.

BEVERLEY

I'm sorry.

TOBEY

Why don't we invite Mr. Meierhenry?

BEVERLEY

Dr. Meierhenry. And that sounds  
like a winner.

JOE BOB

Yeah...like George McGovern in '72.  
That Meierhenry only goes out for  
lectures 'bout diseases that hit  
crabgrass.

BEVERLEY

Then it's settled? Let's party!

INT. SCOTTS' KITCHEN - DAY

It's the morning of the party...and in this relatively state-of-the-art kitchen, Beverley argues with her sister, VICKI LEVASA SWOBODA (37).

MAIN TITLES APPEAR OVER ACTION.

BEVERLEY

What are you doing with that Jell-O  
salad?

VICKI

What do you think I'm doing with  
the Jell-O salad?

Vicki's molded it into...a banjo!

BEVERLEY

You're molding it into a banjo!

VICKI

Well, right on!

BEVERLEY

Tobey doesn't play the banjo. She plays the piano!

VICKI

Well, a banjo isn't exactly a sophisticated mouse trap!

BEVERLEY

Why don't you make a cole slaw piano? For Tobey?

VICKI

My cousin Tobey will go head over heels over this Jell-O banjo!

BEVERLEY

Yeah, but she'd be ecstatic over a Jell-O piano!

Tobey and Joe Bob stand at the kitchen door. The hostilities bring a smile to her face.

EXT. SCOTTS' HOUSE - DAY

In the backyard, Tobey (now in her school clothes) turns to see JODY BOOMSMA (16; a confident, cute girl) and her father, GREG BOOMSMA (37, jovial).

JODY

Hey, Tobey, where you want the drums?

TOBEY

How 'bout...over here?

JODY

Not in the sun, Tobey. It'll be too hot.

Instead, they set up under a neighbor's tree, near the fence.

GREG

You all fired up for your first audience, Tobey?

Tobey, Greg, and Jody set up in a fair amount of time.

TOBEY

Well...sure! How about you, Jody?

JODY  
 Wait'll I hear how we sound. Then  
 I'll be excited.

GINO ANDREUCCI (40, witty; say "an DROO chee") comes around  
 back with an amp.

Gino's wife, REGINA BAZLER-ANDREUCCI (42, down-to-Earth),  
 follows him with an electric guitar in its case.

Not far behind them: Their daughter, LUCIANNA LORETTA "LUCI"  
 ANDREUCCI (15, insecure), who totes a full banjo case.

TOBEY  
 We're gonna be fantastic!

GINO  
 (to Tobey)  
 Sure you are!

LUCIANNA  
 Hi, Tobe. I'm nervous. You nervous?

TOBEY  
 Not me.

JODY  
 Well...a little.

REGINA  
 You shouldn't be nervous. You've  
 been doing more practicing than the  
 United States Olympic team.

LUCIANNA  
 It hasn't been that bad, Mom.

REGINA  
 Well, for a bunch of kids who play  
 ragtime, you sure play loud.

GINO  
 Now, Regina--

REGINA  
 You're not home when they practice.

A nervous Regina eyeballs the teenagers.

REGINA (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, kids. It's not that you're not fine musicians, but the noise...music...is a bit too much for our small house.

TOBEY

We'll try to keep it down, Mrs. Bazler-Andreucci.

Regina pats Tobey on the shoulder.

REGINA

Your mom in the house, Tobey? I wanna see if there's anything I can do to help.

(heads for the house)

Have fun today!

As Regina walks toward the house, Greg, Gino, Tobey, Jody, and Lucianna move the Scotts' 1900-29 upright piano from the side of the house to a spot next to the drum set.

LUCIANNA

What's in here, Tobey...bricks?

With the piano now in place, DIANNE LEVASA RAWSON (20s), her husband MARK RAWSON (20s), their daughter DIANNE RAWSON JR. (3), and their son MARK RAWSON JR. (4) arrive.

Mark Jr. and Dianne Jr. rush past NEIGHBORS to reach the Scotts' backyard.

Dianne hugs Tobey, then Mark gives Tobey his own hug.

DIANNE

Hear you're gonna be a star, Tobey.

MARK

Yeah! Knock 'em down!

Tobey nods as Mark and Dianne watch the tots.

DIANNE

Junie! Markie! Be careful!

MARK

And don't knock over the table!

Jody catches a breath while she eyeballs Tobey.

JODY

How many more people are coming,  
Tobe?

TOBEY

Well, uh, there're the Rogerses,  
the Konovskys, the Munzenmaiers,  
plus your folks and Luci's and  
mine...

JODY

Oh, boy...

TOBEY

And Aunt Vicki and Uncle Charlie  
and the cousins...

Jody now looks some kind of nervous.

Vicki, Regina, and Beverley place platters of food on a large  
picnic table.

Joe Bob stands over a barbecue grill, which cooks ribs,  
steaks, burgers, and wieners.

Lucianna diverts Jody's and Tobey's attention.

LUCIANNA

See that man heading toward the  
picnic table?

JODY, TOBEY

(but not in unison)

Where?

ODIS HOUSTON (35, Black), in a plaid jacket, white shirt,  
orange necktie, and purple slacks, helps himself to the food  
once it's put down.

JODY

Is he one of your neighbors?

LUCIANNA

Never saw him before.

TOBEY

You sure?

JODY

Why don't you ask who he is?

Odis eats as if he's got no tomorrow.

LUCIANNA  
Me? You do it, Jody!

TOBEY  
No...I'll do it.

Tobey catches Beverley as the latter saunters her way to the Scotts' abode.

TOBEY (CONT'D)  
Mom, you know who that guy in the plaid jacket is?

Tobey points toward Odis.

BEVERLEY  
Senatobia, don't point! Now I've gotta bring out...tell you what: Ask your dad.

At the barbecue grill, Tobey pops The Question to her dad. Lucianna and Jody hurry over to the grill.

TOBEY  
Dad, you know who that guy in the plaid jacket and purple pants is?

JOE BOB  
Tobey, I'm cookin'.

JODY  
Couldn't you give us a little hint, Mr. Scott?

JOE BOB  
Tell you what, Tobey: Ask your mom.

TOBEY  
I did. She wouldn't tell me.

JODY  
He's gotta be important...I bet he owns a disco.

LUCIANNA  
We don't play disco.

JODY  
Maybe he's a TV producer.

TOBEY  
TV producers don't dress like that, do they?

JODY  
 (shrugging)  
 Tobey, if you don't know who he is,  
 he must be somebody!

LUCIANNA  
 A pimp?

Three pairs of eyeballs stare at Lucianna.

LATER

Everybody in the Scotts' backyard enjoys the good food and good times.

Tobey and Jody eat, all right...but not much.

Lucianna, though, pigs out!

Beverley stands in front of the makeshift stage, where she claps for attention.

BEVERLEY  
 Ladies and gentlemen...it's  
 showtime! Find a chair, everybody!

The guests grab chairs behind Jody, Lucianna, and Tobey...who dicker in whispers.

TOBEY  
 Let's start out with "Maple Leaf  
 Rag."

LUCIANNA  
 No! Let's end with it!

JODY  
 Let's not do it at all. Besides,  
 that's the first thing everybody'll  
 be looking for.

Beverley gestures toward the audience.

BEVERLEY  
 It's my pleasure to present to  
 you...right here on our stage...the  
 Ragtime Ensemble of Sioux Falls!

Under crowd applause, Lucianna, Jody, and Tobey abandon their victuals and sprint toward their instruments.

Lucianna removes her banjo from its case.

LUCIANNA

Listen, Tobey, we oughta open with  
just the right--

JODY

You guys, they're getting quiet!

Things quiet down, all right...but Jody's warning evokes  
laughs from some guests.

JODY (CONT'D)

Come on, Tobey. Just call it. We'll  
play it.

So, with Jody on drums, Lucianna on banjo, and Tobey on a  
piano whose hammers now stand exposed, "it" turns out to be  
"I'm Certainly Living a Ragtime Life."

And "it" makes the crowd sit up and take notice.

LATER

The Ragtime Ensemble of Sioux Falls comes to its final  
number: "Tiger Rag."

Tobey looks up from the piano during the first bar...and  
finds that the Scotts' backyard has filled with MORE  
PEOPLE...many of whom clap to the music.

AN ELDERLY COUPLE dance to the music!

After sixteen bars, "Tiger Rag" changes keys...and does so  
again sixteen bars later.

At this point, Tobey and Jody leave the playing to Lucianna,  
who handles the famous "Hold That Tiger" riff with eight bars  
of picking...followed by eight bars of wild strumming.

Lucianna gestures Tobey into a solo turn...and Tobey responds  
with sixteen bars where her hands give the piano's keys a  
real workout.

Jody's sixteen-bar drum solo gives way to all three ragtimers  
working the "Hold That Tiger" riff one more time before they  
vamp into an ending.

Result: A fine round of applause.

Lucianna, Tobey, and Jody bow and bow and bow...and Dianne  
Jr. and Mark Jr. run over to Jody's drums to bang them with  
Jody's sticks.

Jody confiscates the drumsticks...and Mark Jr. works the bass drum's pedal.

DIANNE

Mark Rawson Jr.! Upstairs!

Mark Jr. departs the backyard. Mark quickly grabs the son's hand to ensure the departure.

People continue to eat up...and at a makeshift bar, CHARLIE SWOBODA (40; Vicki's hubby and Tobey's uncle) serves up alcoholic and nonalcoholic drinks alike.

Greg brings an empty cup over to Charlie.

CHARLIE

Another one, Greg?

GREG

Nope, Charlie. Better make it water...or else Jody's gotta drive me home.

At the grill, Joe Bob grills hamburgers and hot dogs at a breakneck pace...despite the fact that folks make their way out of the backyard.

The departures don't make Joe Bob happy.

Greg downs his water, then he teams up with Jody to remove her drum set from the stage. Lucianna drags her amp and her banjo toward her parents' 1978 Ford Fairmont.

Guests offer AD LIBBED compliments to Lucianna and Jody.

At the picnic table, Beverley watches Odis continue to eat.

Tobey reaches the table...where Beverley kisses her (and triggers embarrassment in her daughter).

BEVERLEY

Tobey, get Luci and Jody. There's somebody I'd like you to meet.

TOBEY

'Bout time.

BEVERLEY

Tobeeey!

LATER

Beverley, Jody, Lucianna, and Tobey congregate around Odis.

BEVERLEY (CONT'D)  
 Jody, Luci, and Tobey,  
 (with a big grin)  
 I'd like to introduce you to Mr.  
 Odis Boston!

The three ragtimers stare at each other in confusion...then  
 turn their gaze to Odis.

ODIS  
 It's Houston, not Boston.

BEVERLEY  
 Oh, I'm sorry, Mr. Houston.

Odis and the teenagers trade AD LIBBED salutations.

BEVERLEY (CONT'D)  
 Mr. Houston is with Armadillo  
 Records out of Chicago.

JODY  
 (pointing at Tobey)  
 Told you.

BEVERLEY  
 Well,  
 (heads for the house)  
 I'll leave you artists alone to  
 talk.

Tobey looks puzzled.

TOBEY  
 Well, it was nice of you to come,  
 Mr. Houston.

Odis continues to chow down.

ODIS  
 (through his bites)  
 Loved it.

He forks some potato salad into his mouth.

ODIS (CONT'D)  
 I dig the potato salad, too.

Tobey turns to her bandmates...who just stare at her.

TOBEY  
 (to Odis)  
 Are you a friend of my mother's?

ODIS

Nope. I just met her today. When it comes to cooking, she could hold herself a clinic.

TOBEY

Well, yeah...

JODY

How'd you like our cooking...er, playing, Mr. Houston?

ODIS

Huh?

JODY

Our band. Our ensemble. Our music.

Lucianna shakes her head sideways.

ODIS

Oh, yeah. The music.  
(taking another bite)  
You kids are good musicians.

Those three musicians grin.

ODIS (CONT'D)

How old are you? Fifteen? Sixteen?

All three musicians nod.

ODIS (CONT'D)

Yeah, you play real good. You all studying?

Lucianna and Jody shake their heads "yes."

ODIS (CONT'D)

(to Tobey)

How come you're not?

TOBEY

Well, I couldn't get the right teacher...

ODIS

I'm not surprised.  
(taking a bite)  
Hard to teach a kid with your kind of...  
(mumbles through food)  
Got any more potato salad?

TOBEY

What'd you say, Mr. Houston? Hard to teach a kid with my kind of what?

ODIS

I got a teacher for you. He's great. Lives down in Vermillion. You'll have to go a ways, but it'll pay. Jason Williams. Got a pencil, kid?

TOBEY

But, Mr. Houston, how about our--

Odis puts his now-empty paper plate somewhere on the table and searches his pockets for a pencil.

He finds one.

ODIS

We used to work together over at Armadillo, but Jason gave it up for...

Odis rips a piece off his paper plate and scribbles down Jason's address.

Jody, Tobey, and Lucianna make faces at each other.

Odis gives the piece to Tobey.

ODIS (CONT'D)

Hey, thanks. Nice meeting you. Your folks sure know how to throw a barbecue.

He leaves the backyard...and leaves the Ragtime Ensemble of Sioux Falls flabbergasted.

Beverley emerges behind the bandmembers.

BEVERLEY

He didn't even stop and say "goodbye."

TOBEY

Yes, he did. He said you sure know how to throw a barbecue.

BEVERLEY

Didn't he like you? Everybody liked you!

Tobey hands Beverley the broken piece of paper plate.

Beverley looks puzzled.

TOBEY

It's the name of a piano teacher for me. He lives in Vermillion...if Mr. Houston was a talent scout, he sure didn't act like he saw any talent.

LUCIANNA

How'd you get him to come here, Mrs. Scott?

BEVERLEY

Well, my friend Chris...you know Chris, don't you, Tobey?

Tobey nods sharply.

BEVERLEY (CONT'D)

Chris has a next-door neighbor whose cousin has a brother who works for this law firm in Chicago.

TOBEY

So?

BEVERLEY

The law firm does some work for Armadillo, a small blues label that also does jazz and ragtime.

JODY

Yeah?

BEVERLEY

Yeah. Well, one of the people in the law firm became friends with a man connected somehow, I forget how, with Armadillo Records.

LUCIANNA

Was Mr. Houston the man?

BEVERLEY

Nope. Mr. Houston was the friend.

Tobey laughs out loud.

BEVERLEY (CONT'D)

The friend of the man connected with Armadillo Records who knows the person in the law firm who knows the brother of Chris's next-door neighbor's cousin!

Now all four laugh out loud.

BEVERLEY (CONT'D)

They'd have fun with that on "General Hospital." But, anyway, I wanted somebody important to hear you kids.

LUCIANNA

At least somebody's confident about us, Mrs. Scott.

TOBEY

Wait. He did say we were good musicians.

LUCIANNA

He was probably blowing smoke. He just about cornered your potato salad, so he had to say something.

JODY

That's no good, Lucianna. The neighbors liked us. And Mr. Houston thinks you should study, Tobey. We might not be good enough for a talent scout...

BEVERLEY

Well, he's not really...a talent scout.

(coughing)

Aw, what does he know?

TOBEY

Isn't he a talent scout? Isn't he from Armadillo Records, Mom?

BEVERLEY

Well, yes, he's from Armadillo Records. He's a copyright lawyer. He's in the legal department.

Tobey looks disarmed.

TOBEY

He's a lawyer?

BEVERLEY

He's from Armadillo Records.

(shrugging)

Right? He knows the right people.

Right?

(shrugging again)

He was the only one I could get.

Beverley watches Tobey nod.

TOBEY

Mom...let's go call that teacher.

EXT. WEST DUKE STREET APARTMENTS, VERMILLION, SD - DAY

This is a modern, three-story building not too far from the University of South Dakota campus...less than an hour south of Sioux Falls.

INT. JASON WILLIAMS' APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

JASON WILLIAMS (42, friendly, Black) lives here; his cozy, cluttered-looking living room features a grand piano where a lounge chair would usually go.

Jason's pet cat roams around the living room while he, in a lounge chair, talks to Beverley and Tobey...both of whom sit on the adjacent sofa.

JASON

Well, anyway, I used to be a blues singer...

Beverley makes a slow rise from the sofa...but a rapt Tobey gestures her mom back onto the sofa.

JASON (CONT'D)

I had a record out back in '76, but it didn't do anything.

Tobey shakes her head "yes."

JASON (CONT'D)

Well, I chucked it all because I felt teaching was my thing all along.

(looking embarrassed)

Even now, I can still play better by ear than from notes.

Jason walks over to the piano, where he plays "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star."

First, he delivers the tune in the conventional way...then Jason plays "Twinkle, Twinkle" as if from a Disney film.

Tobey and Beverley continue to listen as Jason turns "Twinkle, Twinkle" into a classical piece...then it becomes a raunchy blues.

Now "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" becomes a Ramsey Lewis-style jazz number...a Scott Joplin-like rag...a country tune...a funk tune Earth, Wind, and Fire would be proud of.

Beverley taps her feet to Jason's music...and Tobey pays the closest of attention.

The transformation continues: That nursery rhyme becomes a Top 40 rocker...a cocktail-lounge staple...and, to top it all off, a rousing bit of Gospel.

Jason watches as his two guests applaud.

JASON (CONT'D)

Thanks.

TOBEY

You're welcome, Mr. Williams!

JASON

Here's the thing about it, Tobey: The notes are just somebody else's opinion. You should know how to read them, sure, but they're not the last word.

Tobey nods.

JASON (CONT'D)

As a musician, you should leave your own mark on the music.

TOBEY

That's what I was trying to tell the last three teachers I had...but I didn't know how...and they didn't care.

Jason and Tobey high-five each other.

EXT. WEST NINTH STREET, SIOUX FALLS, SD - NIGHT

SOME CHILDREN ride their bikes along the street...

EXT. SCOTTS' HOUSE - NIGHT

...and pass by the Family Scott's place.

INT. TOBEY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tobey's room is moderately furnished...and includes her three favorite amenities: A stereo, a TV set, and her own phone.

She's on the phone right now.

JODY (V.O.)  
How was it, Tobey?

TOBEY  
It was really great. You should've heard what he did with "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star!"

JODY (V.O.)  
With what?

TOBEY  
Just an example. Jody. I mean all the different ways you can play a song and make it brand-new every time. "Twinkle" was just an exercise.

JODY (V.O.)  
Oh...I knew you wanted us to be different, Tobey, but nursery rhymes?

TOBEY  
Don't worry. I'm going to learn a lot from Jason Williams.

JODY (V.O.)  
Just what we need! I expect a lot from you, Tobey. Have you got something to work on tomorrow at Lucianna's house?

TOBEY  
Tomorrow? I just got started...I guess I could do "Twinkle--"

JODY (V.O.)  
Forget it! See you tomorrow!

TOBEY  
Bye, Jody.

A nodding Tobey hangs up the phone.

EXT. WEST DUKE STREET APARTMENTS, VERMILLION, SD - DAY

A YOUNG COUPLE (in T-shirts and shorts) recline in the sun.

INT. JASON WILLIAMS' APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Jason shows Tobey how to play melody notes on top of chords in the right hand (rather than the left) and how to thump out a walking bass line with the left hand.

JASON

That's good, Tobey...you pick up things faster than anyone I've ever taught. You're a real natural.

Tobey looks excited.

TOBEY

Mr. Williams...I was wondering if you'd like to hear our ragtime band at rehearsal...I thought if you heard us, you'd give us an opinion I could really respect.

JASON

(slowly nodding)

You bet I'll come over and hear you rag it up.

Now Tobey nods.

EXT. SOUTH SPRING STREET, SIOUX FALLS, SD - DAY

A FEW JOGGERS hustle down Spring...

EXT. ANDREUCCIS' HOUSE - DAY

...and pass a house whose siding sure needs replacement.

Two bikes rest in the driveway, as does that '78 Fairmont.

INT. ANDREUCCIS' BASEMENT - DAY

Lucianna (on banjo), Jody (on drums), and Tobey (on a battered 1910-29 upright player piano) rehearse Carey Morgan's 1915 "Trilby Rag."

Jason sits on a sofa in a space that could use a new carpet...as well as a paint job.

When "Trilby Rag" ends, Jason applauds, nods, and flashes an ear-to-ear smile.

JASON

Well, you guys are pretty good musicians.

LUCIANNA

That's what Mr. Houston said...and we don't have any potato salad!

TOBEY

You really think so?

Jason leans forward in his seat.

JASON

Yeah, I really think you guys are terrific...but I know what your problem is.

JODY

What?

JASON

Well, now, you put a lot of spirit into "Trilby Rag," "A Ragtime Life," and "Magnetic Rag." And I'm not knocking that.

Tobey nods.

JASON (CONT'D)

Only...well...the instrumentation is wrong. Know what I mean?

Lucianna frowns...Jody looks puzzled.

JASON (CONT'D)

See, what you've got to do is figure out what sound you want and what instruments you need for that sound.

A smile crosses Tobey's face.

JASON (CONT'D)

You wouldn't play a Beethoven concerto with a bunch of harmonicas, now would you?

The three teens shake their heads back and forth.

TOBEY

We like playing ragtime, but we want to work loosely enough with different instruments without distorting the rags. One thing we're not is Dixieland, and that's another thing.

JODY

Yeah. We want to be able to improvise...but not as much as they do in Dixieland.

LUCIANNA

I play a little rock, and...

JODY

Me, too.

LUCIANNA

Well, I'm thinking about us playing some rock songs as rags.

TOBEY

Rag and roll. We want to, down the line, experiment with that, hopefully pull some surprises. Pull in the kids as well as the older people.

JASON

(leans forward again)

I see. Sounds like you're trying to do what Stark Music Company of St. Louis did when it put out "The Red-Backed Book of Rags" in 1912.

The three ragtimers eyeball each other, then eyeball Jason.

JASON (CONT'D)

It was a set of fifteen arrangements for a small ensemble, but loosely scored along the lines of the piano rags to allow various groups of instruments without, as you put it, Tobey, distorting the texture.

Tobey, Lucianna, and Jody nod.

JASON (CONT'D)

Sounds like you need a bass. And you should get a horn, too.

TOBEY

(to Jody)

You know anyone who plays a  
horn...other than yourself?

JODY

(to Jason)

What kind of horn?

JASON

Trumpet, trombone...

Jody shakes her head sideways.

JODY

I'd switch to trombone in a minute,  
but I'm an even better drummer.  
Other than that, I don't know  
anyone who's really good on  
horns...

JASON

If you can get only one horn, make  
it a trumpet.

Jody, Tobey, and Lucianna look glum.

JASON (CONT'D)

Hey, don't let it hang you up.  
You're really excellent players.  
Just get yourself a sound.

Jason jumps off the sofa.

JASON (CONT'D)

Listen to some records. Eubie  
Blake, Gunther Schuller, Claude  
Bolling...he's got a good one with  
"Maple Leaf Rag" on it...Jo Ann  
Castle, even some old  
78s...whatever it takes.

A nodding Tobey smiles.

JASON (CONT'D)

Listen to anybody who's ever  
recorded ragtime...takes time to  
develop a sound, you know?

Jason walks toward the basement door as Regina comes down the  
basement stairs.

JASON (CONT'D)  
Take it light.

REGINA  
Mr. Williams, thanks so much for  
coming.

Regina and Jason shake hands.

JASON  
Thanks for the hospitality, Mrs.  
Bazler-Andreucci.

Jason waves at the three girls and the lone woman before he  
leaves the house.

TOBEY  
A sound...he's right.

JODY  
Yeah, he is right. With a bass and  
horn, we'll be all right!

Regina coughs a bit.

LUCIANNA  
What's wrong, Mom?

REGINA  
Luci, the plaster--

LUCIANNA  
I know. It's bouncing off the  
kitchen walls. Look, why don't we  
just panel the kitchen walls?

REGINA  
Lucianna, this isn't funny. I don't  
want to burst your bubbles, but  
it's getting harder and harder for  
me to take it.

Lucianna's mouth flies open.

REGINA (CONT'D)  
And if you're going to add more  
instruments, especially a horn,  
well, I'm sorry, but you'll just  
have to find another practice  
place.

LUCIANNA  
Mom--

REGINA  
 (holding up her hand)  
 Lucianna, I mean it. I'm really  
 sorry, Tobey, Jody...and I think  
 your teacher's right. You all are  
 good musicians.

Regina rests her hands on Lucianna's shoulders.

REGINA (CONT'D)  
 Luci, you know I've always  
 encouraged you, bought you your  
 first guitar, found you that banjo  
 in a good rummage sale, taught you  
 to play the piano...and didn't even  
 charge you a cent--

LUCIANNA  
 Mom--

REGINA  
 Well, I don't want you to give up  
 plucking, but...please, if you can  
 try to find someplace else.

Lucianna's nod is heavy.

INT. SCOTTS' LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

In this modestly-furnished room, Joe Bob relaxes in his  
 favorite chair as he reads today's "Argus Leader."

Tobey accidentally slams the screen door on her way inside  
 the house. She eyes a startled Joe Bob.

TOBEY  
 Sorry.

JOE BOB  
 When I was your age, they taught me  
 to say "hello."

TOBEY  
 The door slipped...just thinking.

JOE BOB  
 Funny...when I was your age, they  
 didn't teach us to think.

TOBEY

Well, Dad, when they tell you to think about a career by the time you reach sixth grade, like they do these days, you've gotta learn how to think.

JOE BOB

What's splittin' your head, Tobey?

TOBEY

Well, Jason came to our practice session today and made a lot of suggestions.

Joe Bob folds his newspaper back in place.

TOBEY (CONT'D)

You know, about...well, the way for us to develop the right sound, what kind of music, what kind of instrumentation...

JOE BOB

I know the big labels ain't bustin' down doors for a ragtime band, but what's wrong with whatcha got now?

TOBEY

Jason thinks what we want is a loosely-scored, piano-based sound. In fact, a merger of ragtime with other musics.

Tobey watches Joe Bob raise his eyebrows.

TOBEY (CONT'D)

You remember Jo Ann Castle, who was on "The Lawrence Welk Show" from 1959 to '69?

JOE BOB

Are you kiddin', Tobey? All that time I was on the road, tryin' to make it as a country singer. I didn't even have time to watch TV, we were on the road so much!

TOBEY

Well, anyway, we have to get a bass...and a horn.

Joe Bob grunts.

TOBEY (CONT'D)  
 Jason's right. It sounds like what  
 we've been after...but now, we know  
 where we're going.

JOE BOB  
 Well, yeah. He's a teacher.

Tobey nods.

JOE BOB (CONT'D)  
 Hey, Tobey, why don'tcha call your  
 cousin Dianne, the librarian?

Joe Bob's and Beverley's daughter beams.

TOBEY  
 You know, that sounds like a  
 winner.

And Tobey heads for the living-room phone.

INT. ANDREUCCIS' BASEMENT - DAY

Tobey, Lucianna, and Jody sit on the sofa.

TOBEY  
 How much've you got?

JODY  
 Four bucks...all the money I can  
 spare right now.

LUCIANNA  
 I've got two fifty...in Susan B.  
 Anthony dollars. And pennies.

TOBEY  
 It's still money, Luci. I've got  
 five dollars and thirty-seven  
 cents. How many tapes is that?

LUCIANNA  
 Only one, Tobey.

JODY  
 Not if you buy blanks.

TOBEY  
 Well, we'll only need one. The rest  
 of the money'll go into old  
 78s...that's a blank tape, by the  
 way.

Lucianna and Jody nod.

TOBEY (CONT'D)

And in a few days, we'll have some good stuff from Dianne and we'll have a good idea of what we want when we're ready to bring in the new musicians.

JODY

Yeah...we fit like a patent-leather shoe. I hope we find two more who'll fit in that well.

LUCIANNA

How're we gonna find them? Put roadblocks all over Minnesota Avenue and stop anyone carrying an instrument case?

Jody shakes her head "no."

JODY

I thought about this last night. Why don't we have an open audition?

TOBEY

Yeah! That's a great idea!

JODY

What we ought to do is print up some flyers. Maybe your dad could do it, Tobey. Mason-Dixon Oil wouldn't mind.

TOBEY

I heard that. Dad says they use the copier over there for everything else...other than business.

JODY

And we'll put 'em up all over town, with the date and place.

TOBEY

Great! They could say something like: "In these days of high unemployment, the Ragtime Ensemble of Sioux Falls is now hiring two more musicians."

JODY

Right! We're expanding to give kids more jobs instead of closing down the plant and leaving it up to Singapore or Japan.

LUCIANNA

Yeah. And let's put the words "bass" and "horn" in big letters. And maybe add something about age.

TOBEY

Huh?

LUCIANNA

We might get college students.

TOBEY

We could use the experience.

Lucianna shakes her head sideways.

LUCIANNA

They'd only boss us around.

TOBEY

Well...I guess you're right.

LUCIANNA

Doggone right. Pretty soon, they'll be telling us what to play and everything. Older kids are like that.

Lucianna jumps off the sofa.

LUCIANNA (CONT'D)

You're talking to experience here: I've got a younger sister.

(sits back down)

And my two older sisters boss me around!

Jody and Tobey nod.

LUCIANNA (CONT'D)

We already decided what we're gonna play. And if an older person doesn't like it, we'll be playing his or her stuff.

TOBEY

So...should we make it fifteen-or-sixteen-year-olds?

JODY

How about eighteen? Cut it off at eighteen.

LUCIANNA

(nodding)

Sounds fine to me. Eighteen's close enough to fifteen and sixteen not to get too bossy.

TOBEY

Well...we're all set.

LUCIANNA

No, we're not!

JODY

What is it now, you Bad News Bear you?

LUCIANNA

With Mom's plaster falling off the walls, where are we gonna rehearse?

TOBEY

Don't worry. My mother'll think of something.

INT. SCOTTS' LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Tobey and Beverley watch TV ("Cheers" is ON).

BEVERLEY

You can use the garage, Tobey...but you've got to clean it out.

Tobey signifies her glee.

BEVERLEY (CONT'D)

Besides, it's so cluttered we can't get the car in there, anyway...and it's a Chevette!

MONTAGE SEQUENCE

EXT. SCOTTS' GARAGE - DAY

Tobey, Jody, and Lucianna take all the junk from inside the garage to outside the garage...on the alley side.

Beverley looks puzzled.

EXT. SIOUX FALLS REGIONAL SANITARY LANDFILL, HARTFORD, SD - DAY

Beverley and the Ragtime Ensemble of Sioux Falls (all in jeans and T-shirts) empty the Scott junk from a dump truck.

EXT. MASON-DIXON OIL COMPANY, SIOUX FALLS, SD - DAY

A low-lying building in an industrial park.

INT. MASON-DIXON PRINTING OFFICE - DAY

Joe Bob prints the flyers that announce his daughter's band's open audition.

EXT. SCOTTS' GARAGE - DAY

Beverley and Tobey fasten a large padlock to the garage door.

EXT. WEST TENTH STREET - DAY

Jody, Tobey, and Lucianna hang flyers.

Each flyer reads: "ALL YOU GREAT MUSICIANS LOOKING FOR A HOME...THE RAGTIME ENSEMBLE OF SIOUX FALLS IS EXPANDING! BRING YOUR BASS OR HORN TO AN AUDITION AT 1707 WEST NINTH STREET, 1:00 PM, SUNDAY, 8-19-1984."

In smaller letters: "OVER EIGHTEEN NEEDN'T APPLY."

END MONTAGE

EXT. SCOTTS' HOUSE - DAY

It's the Sunday of the open audition...and all's quiet in the Scotts' neighborhood.

INT. SCOTTS' GARAGE - DAY

Tired from helping to move that old upright into the garage, Lucianna and Tobey rest on the piano when an equally-exhausted Jody shows up...with a tape recorder and signs that say: "THIS WAY TO THE AUDITION."

JODY

Need your help, you guys. We ought to put these signs up on Minnesota and Main and Eighth. Ninth and Tenth are already well-covered.

LUCIANNA

That's a good idea. I was hoping people would find us.

JODY

Don't worry, Luci. They'll find us.

LUCIANNA

I'm kinda tired right now, though...after moving that piano of Tobey's.

TOBEY

(rising up from piano)  
Lucianna--

LUCIANNA

I know. I'll stand outside and direct traffic.

Tobey and Jody leave the garage while Lucianna reclines on the piano.

LATER

Jody and Tobey (both sit at the piano) watch Lucianna reenter the garage.

LUCIANNA (CONT'D)

Where's everybody?  
(shrugging wildly)  
You think they got lost? You think they had trouble finding the house? Is this house quarantined?

TOBEY

You mean nobody came to the corner yet?

LUCIANNA

Well...there was a one-hundred-and-four-year-old woman walking a German shepherd.

TOBEY

Oh, yeah. That's Mrs. McKennan.

JODY

Was she carrying a horn?

Lucianna sits on a bar stool.

LUCIANNA  
 Boy...I really thought we'd get  
 mobbed.

All three teenagers stare at the concrete.

TOBEY  
 Yeah...there isn't anybody in the  
 world that doesn't want to play in  
 a band.

JODY  
 Right!

All three teenagers HEAR a rap on the side of the garage.

They all look up...and watch JEFFERY KUEHL (10), bugle in  
 hands, walk inside the garage, where he stares at the girls.

JEFFERY  
 Is this where you're supposed to  
 try out?

TOBEY  
 Yeah.

Excitement grows in Tobey.

TOBEY (CONT'D)  
 What've you got?

JODY  
 (almost a whisper)  
 A bugle...  
 (to Jeffery)  
 What's your name?

JEFFERY  
 Jeffery Kuehl. Can I play now?

Tobey, Jody, and Lucianna look embarrassed.

TOBEY  
 Yeah. Play, Jeffery.

Jeffery stands at attention all the while as he blows out  
 "Taps" and "Flag Raising."

TOBEY (CONT'D)  
 Nice...very nice, Jeffery.

JODY  
 Thanks, Jeffery.

LUCIANNA

Don't call us. We'll call you.

Jeffery does an about face and walks out of the garage.

LATER

Jody's tape recorder PLAYS BACK a cassette of 1920s music.

BRAD KLIMENT (15), a full duffel bag in his grip, strolls into the garage...and Jody shuts the tape recorder OFF.

TOBEY

You like that?

BRAD

Oh...I guess it was dumb to come in here.

TOBEY

How come?

BRAD

That music you were playing...that's what you want, isn't it?

TOBEY

Yes, it is.

BRAD

Sure sounds like nothing I've ever heard before.

TOBEY

Did you come to audition?

BRAD

Well, sort of...I just wanted a chance to play for a new audience.

JODY

Where's your instrument?

BRAD

You're not going to believe this, but...

Brad lifts a set of bagpipes out of his duffel bag.

TOBEY

I'm sorry...but we can't use a bagpipe.

BRAD

I know, but couldn't you just let me play for you? I'm really good...

TOBEY

I'm sure you are, but--

BRAD

Please? With your instruments, you can play anytime you feel like it. But with me, the only time I get to play my pipes is in the Fourth of July parade!

TOBEY

Okay, uh...

BRAD

Brad. Bradley Kliment.

TOBEY

Hit it, Brad!

Brad toots out "Amazing Grace" when CLEVELAND (a tough-looking boy of 17) stomps into the garage with a Fender bass in his grip and a backpack on his back.

LUCIANNA

(whispering to Jody)  
We're rolling now!

JODY

(shakes her head "no")  
Where are the girls?

Cleveland glowers at Brad, who stops the music.

CLEVELAND

(to the ragtimers)  
What the hell kind of band is this?  
Drums across the Big Sioux?

BRAD

Don't worry. I'm leaving.

TOBEY

(to Cleveland)  
He only gets heard on Independence Day.

While Brad leaves the garage, Jody casts an admiring glance at Cleveland.

JODY  
So you play bass.

CLEVELAND  
 No, this is a theater organ and I'm  
 Rosemary Bailey.

Jody and Lucianna stare at each other.

TOBEY  
 (to Cleveland)  
 All right. Let's hear your stuff.  
 (to herself)  
 Rosemary who?

CLEVELAND  
 Right own.  
 (plugs bass into amp)  
 You ain't never seen nothin' like  
 CLEVELAND!!

Cleveland sets down his backpack and removes firecrackers and other things from it.

He stuffs the firecrackers and the other things into his pockets and down his belt.

Tobey, Lucianna, and Jody just stare at each other.

Cleveland tunes up a little...then...sings.

Actually, Cleveland attempts to scream out "Paralyzed," the 1968 jam by The Legendary Stardust Cowboy.

The three young ragtimers stare at Cleveland as if he'd landed to Earth from Uranus.

Now Cleveland empties his pockets and the space behind his belt. He smashes the firecrackers and other objects to the garage floor...where they, well, explode.

CLEVELAND (CONT'D)  
 YEAH!

Tobey, Jody, and Lucianna look up to see WALTER MEIERHENRY (40s, picky; good-looking) storm into the Scotts' garage.

Cleveland's exhibition ends.

WALTER  
 What the hell is going on?

TOBEY

Hello, Mr. Meierhenry...did the noise...uh, sound...disturb you?

WALTER

Dr. Meierhenry! And you're doggone right it did. You know this garage is closer to my house than yours, Tobey.

TOBEY

Sorry, sir.

WALTER

You say you're sorry, Tobey, but perhaps you're not sure of what you're sorry for.

TOBEY

I'm sorry we bothered you, Dr. Meierhenry.

(to herself)

Now would you please leave?

WALTER

Look, Tobey, I'm not some frustrated CIA agent. No, I happen to be doing some very important, exciting, crucial work.

TOBEY

Yes, sir, I agree.

Joe Bob enters the garage and stands next to Walter.

Tobey looks puzzled.

WALTER

Mr. Scott, I can't afford to have firecrackers and screaming going on practically in my living room. What's your solution to the problem?

JOE BOB

Tobey, whatcha gonna do about it?  
(points at Cleveland)  
And what's that?

TOBEY

Dad, meet Cleveland. His work is, uh...different.

JOE BOB  
Different, huh?

TOBEY  
Yeah. He was just finished. Thanks,  
Cleveland.

Cleveland nods. He shoves his bass back into its case.

CLEVELAND  
Don'tcha dig it?

TOBEY  
Yeah, but we've got a lot of other  
people to hear.

CLEVELAND  
Yeah.

And Cleveland leaves the garage...and brushes an indignant  
Walter on the shoulder.

WALTER  
Well!  
(to Tobey and Joe Bob)  
Do you know why I need absolute  
quiet?

Joe Bob shakes his head "no."

WALTER (CONT'D)  
A spruce tree blight...a spruce  
tree blight that, if left  
unchecked, will destroy every  
spruce tree in the Midwest.

TOBEY  
But they were only firecrackers.

WALTER  
If you care at all about our  
environment, you'll understand why  
I must be allowed to continue my  
work in peace and quiet.

Joe Bob's nod is nonchalant.

WALTER (CONT'D)  
(to Joe Bob)  
You understand.

And Joe Bob continues to shake his head up and down.

TOBEY

You're making a vaccine...to make  
the tree better.

WALTER

Not quite, Tobey: Some of us are  
trying to develop a more resistant  
tree.

JODY

That's nice.

WALTER

I really need my quiet.

TOBEY

No more screaming or firecrackers.

WALTER

Good.

Walter strides out of the garage.

TOBEY

(to Joe Bob)

No more firecrackers.

A still-nodding Joe Bob walks out of the Scotts' garage.

LUCIANNA

That was really weird.

JODY

Yeah. He was really weird...which  
one?

LUCIANNA

That Cleveland was something else.

The three girls fan the smoke out of the garage...but after a  
few seconds, Tobey heads for the house.

TOBEY

(on the way out)

I'm gonna go get a can of  
Glade...if this is Sioux Falls'  
talent, we've had it.

Tobey backs her way back into the garage when she spots KELLY  
DAWN "K.D." SCHUERHOLZ (16, spoiled, and bespectacled), who  
carries a Fender bass in its case.

K.D.  
Hi! Is this the audition?

TOBEY  
Yeah! You play bass?

K.D.  
Yep!

TOBEY  
What's your name?

K.D.  
You can call me K.D. I never tell anybody what the initials stand for.

Lucianna gives Tobey a bewildered stare.

LUCIANNA  
K.D.

K.D.  
Yep. K.D. Schuerholz.

JODY  
Wait a minute...does your father own Schuerholz's?

K.D.  
Yep. Schuerholz's...the biggest music store in the Sioux Empire.

As the three ragtimers watch, K.D. pulls her bass from its case, then plugs the instrument into Lucianna's amp.

TOBEY  
We play ragtime, K.D. We don't want to do rock like everybody else our age. That's why we want a horn, too. Do you know any ragtime?

K.D.  
Well, uh...I can learn.

TOBEY  
Well, you want to start?

Jody goes to her drum set, Tobey moves over to the piano, and Lucianna picks up her banjo.

TOBEY (CONT'D)  
What would you like to do?

K.D.  
Whatever you want to do.

TOBEY  
We'll do what you want to do, but  
it's got to be quiet. There's a  
weird neighbor next door. Okay?

K.D.  
Okay. But you've gotta pick it.

TOBEY  
Well, K.D., look. It's your  
audition. Play what you feel most  
comfortable with.

Confusion grips K.D.

LUCIANNA  
Just name any kind of rag you've  
heard of.

K.D.  
"Twelfth Street Rag!"

Lucianna, Jody, and Tobey launch "Twelfth Street Rag..." but  
K.D. stands there, awkwardly holding her bass.

After two bars, K.D. plays at last...and screws up.

The music stops.

K.D. (CONT'D)  
I don't know that one too well.

LUCIANNA  
K.D., why don't you just play a few  
licks, so we can hear you all by  
yourself?

K.D.  
Well...okay.

K.D. fumbles around with a bass line.

JODY  
You can't play.

K.D.  
I've had only...only three lessons.

LUCIANNA  
Good God!

K.D.

I want to get in a band so bad. Let me join. I'll learn as I go along. You won't even hear me at first.

LUCIANNA

That's not good enough for us.

TOBEY

I'm sorry, K.D., but we can't use you.

K.D.

Aw, come on, puh-leeze?

TOBEY

We can't do it, K.D. I'm really sorry.

Tobey looks sideways at Jody, then eyeballs K.D.

TOBEY (CONT'D)

We need someone who can play.

K.D.

I'll learn. Really! Look...I'll tell you what: Let me join and I'll guarantee fabulous discounts for you at the store.

K.D. sets her bass off to the side.

K.D. (CONT'D)

Anything you want. My dad'll probably even give you free stuff if you let me join.

Jody, Lucianna, and Tobey eyeball each other.

LUCIANNA

Well, maybe we could--

TOBEY

We'll have to talk about it, K.D. We've still got other people to hear...look, I'll call you. Okay?

K.D.

Tonight? Tonight?

TOBEY

Okay. Okay.

K.D. packs up her Fender bass and leaves the garage.

As soon as K.D. is gone:

LUCIANNA  
(to Tobey)  
Take her. We'll teach her.

JODY  
I wouldn't mind putting a cowbell  
in my setup.

TOBEY  
Jody...

JODY  
She's got enthusiasm coming out of  
her ears. Don't you think she can  
learn on the job?

TOBEY  
She tried to bribe us. She whines  
like a little kid. She's probably  
always gotten her way, so it's no  
surprise she thinks she can join a  
band without knowing note the  
first.

LUCIANNA  
Tobey, do you see anybody busting  
down the doors to get in here? Do  
you?

TOBEY  
Three lessons? Come on! Look, you  
guys, when you're working with a  
music like ragtime, you'd better  
know what you're doing.

Tobey noodles around on the piano.

TOBEY (CONT'D)  
Or somebody like Scott Joplin will  
come up from the grave and slam the  
piano lid on your fingers!

Tobey ends her noodling to join Lucianna and Jody in gazing  
at the garage floor.

TOBEY (CONT'D)

Here we are...no horn, unless we change our music to military drills...and no bass...not even a tuba! Boy, I thought that one would be easy!

LUCIANNA

I thought it'd all be easy.

All three musicians continue to stare at the floor.

INT. TOBEY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tobey sits at her bed and calls K.D.

TOBEY

(into phone)

Hello, K.D.

INT. SCHUERHOLZES' LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

With the receiver to her ear, K.D. reclines on the floor in this plush, well-appointed space.

K.D.

You gonna let me in? Are you?

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

TOBEY

No. Come around again when you've learned how to play.

K.D.

Oh, nooooo...

Tobey holds the phone away from her ear while K.D. whines.

K.D. (CONT'D)

You'll feel sorry you missed out on a good thing! When I got home, I asked my father for horn lessons. And maybe accordion!

Tobey just nods.

K.D. (CONT'D)

And if that doesn't work, I'm gonna bug him to let me take up the drums. Or maybe the xylophone!

(MORE)

K.D. (CONT'D)

Or maybe the oboe or the bassoon or  
the synthesizer or the double-bell  
euphonium!

Now Tobey hangs up the phone.

With the receiver still against her ear, K.D. looks some kind  
of surprised.

INT. SCOTTS' GARAGE - DAY

Jody sits behind her drum set, Lucianna leans against a wall  
with her banjo case, and Tobey reclines at the piano.

Jody's tape recorder rests on the garage floor.

No music is in the air...live or Memorex.

TOBEY

(flexing her fingers)

We oughta practice.

Jody and Lucianna stare Tobey down.

LUCIANNA

Girl, this is the pits. Things  
always start out great and look how  
they wind up.

Lucianna sets her banjo case down and walks around.

LUCIANNA (CONT'D)

First, we get together and then our  
sound's no good. Then we have to  
find another place to practice.

The Ragtime Ensemble's banjoist shrugs wildly.

LUCIANNA (CONT'D)

And then we find our sound and hold  
this great open tryout and look who  
shows up:

(wildly shrugs again)

"Gong Show" rejects!

Now Lucianna sits next to Tobey at the old upright.

LUCIANNA (CONT'D)

If we ever get a bass and horn,  
they'll probably admit to chemical  
addiction right after we get good!

Jody and Tobey look at each other.

JODY  
Mo-oan!

TOBEY  
Gro-oan!

JODY  
Sob, sob, sob.

LUCIANNA  
Come on!

JODY  
No, you come on! How come you've  
always gotta see the negative side  
of things?

TOBEY  
Jody's right. We didn't get this  
far just to give up and moan and  
groan!

Tobey stands up.

TOBEY (CONT'D)  
We're gonna find us a horn and a  
bass and until we do, we're gonna  
keep practicing when we can. And we  
don't stop looking.

JODY  
(nodding)  
Even if we don't find somebody by  
the time school starts, we'll find  
someone afterwards. Lot of kids are  
away for the summer.

Jody rises from her drum set.

JODY (CONT'D)  
And besides, we just passed those  
flyers around the neighborhood.

TOBEY  
Yeah. We'll have to try downtown.

JODY  
Yeah. And high school does mean new  
kids...and we might find somebody  
in band or orchestra.

LUCIANNA  
You think so?

EXT. WASHINGTON HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

A new school year is under way...and STUDENTS (mostly in small groups) hang around outside this Depression-era gray-brick building in architecture's "Federal style."

INT. WASHINGTON HIGH FIRST FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

Tobey and K.D., both sophomores at Washington, walk in opposite directions.

K.D. sneers at Tobey, who passes by a bulletin board.

The board boasts a flyer that reads: "THE RAGTIME ENSEMBLE OF SIOUX FALLS (PIANO, BANJO, DRUMS) SEEKS A DYNAMIC SOUND USING BASS AND HORN. IF YOU PLAY TRUMPET (OR TROMBONE) OR BASS, PLEASE CONTACT: LUCIANNA ANDREUCCI (HOME ROOM 102), JODY BOOMSMA (HOME ROOM 214), OR TOBEY SCOTT (HOME ROOM 114)."

Tobey heads for her home room...where CASSANDRA MARIE "CASSY" COUGHLIN-MUJICA (16, shy, a motormouth of sorts) stands right in the doorway.

CASSY

Are you Tobey Scott?

Cassy evacuates the doorway and joins Tobey in the hallway.

TOBEY

Yes.

Cassy does a doubletake.

TOBEY (CONT'D)

Are you in this home room?

CASSY

I'm a junior this year...but, well, I did want to ask you about the notice. Is that yours? The one about the ragtime band?

TOBEY

Yes, it is...do you play a horn or a bass?

CASSY

I play the...uh...trumpet.

Tobey's all smiles.

CASSY (CONT'D)

And trombone, and tenor sax, and piano, and organ, and guitar, and drums.

TOBEY

Darn! How long've you been playing trumpet?

CASSY

Four years.

Now Tobey looks ecstatic.

TOBEY

I'm not even gonna ask if you're pretty good, 'cause you've got to be.

Cassy produces a slow smile.

CASSY

Yeah.

TOBEY

Well...what's your name?

CASSY

Sorry about that. Cassy Coughlin-Mujica.

TOBEY

Cathy?

CASSY

Nope. Cassy. That's short for Cassandra.

TOBEY

(nodding)

Oh. You play in the school band?

CASSY

Oh, no. I never played in a band...but I'd like to. I...I've always wanted to.

TOBEY

Well, why didn't you join the...heck, you could've been the school band.

CASSY  
I've never had the, uh,  
opportunity. And, well, a ragtime  
band sounds interesting.

SOME STUDENTS walk down the hall.

CASSY (CONT'D)  
Maybe you could let me play for you  
and then, when you hear what I can  
do, then you can decide.

TOBEY  
(with a nod)  
Great! Can you come over to my  
house after school? We've been  
using my garage to practice in--

CASSY  
How about right after school?  
I...could be there by three. Where  
do you live?

TOBEY  
1707 West Ninth Street.

CASSY  
No problem.

INT. SCOTTS' GARAGE - DAY

Today, Jody works with an old snare drum and some traps while  
Lucianna tunes her banjo and Tobey sits at the old upright.

All three teens look excited.

JODY  
Well, all right! A horn!

Now Jody looks worried.

JODY (CONT'D)  
Maybe I should've brought the whole  
set to show her how we sound.

TOBEY  
Nah, that's okay. We'll mostly be  
hearing Cassy, and maybe tomorrow,  
if she works out, we can have the  
whole set--

Her beautiful trumpet case in tow, Cassy jogs into the Scott  
family's garage.

CASSY  
 (still jogging)  
 Is this the place?

TOBEY  
 This is the place; open your case.

Cassy does exactly that; she extracts a shiny new trumpet.  
 She fondles the horn, then performs a self-written piece.  
 Jody looks starry-eyed...Lucianna grins from ear to  
 ear...Tobey nods to the beat until the tune ends.

TOBEY (CONT'D)  
 Hey, Cassy, what was that?

CASSY  
 Well, I...I wrote it myself.

JODY  
 Wow...

LUCIANNA  
 You're hired!

Tobey and Jody stare Lucianna down.

LUCIANNA (CONT'D)  
 I'm sorry. Maybe we oughta talk it  
 over.

JODY  
 Right.

TOBEY  
 Right.

LUCIANNA  
 Okay. Let's consult...okay with  
 you?

TOBEY  
 Yeah.

Lucianna points to Jody.

LUCIANNA  
 How about you?

JODY  
 Uh huh.

JODY, LUCIANNA, TOBEY  
You're hired!

CASSY  
I'm really honored. I really appreciate it. I really do. I'm gonna be in a real live ragtime band! This is really great--

TOBEY  
Wait a minute, Cassy: You haven't heard us play a note yet. We still need to know when we can get together.

CASSY  
I'm in a ragtime band!  
(shakes her head "no")  
I can't believe it! Wow! A...when can we get together?

TOBEY  
That's right. When can we get together?

CASSY  
Oh. Right! Well...any day but Wednesday is fine. And right after school. In fact, I've got to be home by five. Is that okay? Is that possible?

JODY  
All right with me...but there's one day where I've got to work at the Sunrise supermarket on Minnesota. My dad's the manager.

LUCIANNA  
And I've got guitar lessons on Thursdays. That knocks us down to three days...what about weekends?

CASSY  
No! Weekends are out!

TOBEY  
That's when we'll be performing!

CASSY  
Oh, well, the weekends...the nights should be all right.  
(frowning)  
(MORE)

CASSY(CONT'D)

I don't mind the jobs, but...it'll be hard to practice during the day.

TOBEY

Oh, boy...my piano lessons are on Tuesdays. That means only two rehearsal days.

LUCIANNA

Oh, boy...

Tobey's face brightens up.

TOBEY

Wait a minute! Lucianna, if you can change your guitar lessons to Wednesdays, I'll try to change mine, too, so that should mean four practice days.

JODY

I can work at Sunrise on Wednesdays, too...the store, that is.

LUCIANNA

All right...Wednesday'll be our workday and lesson day...if we can work it.

CASSY

Great!

Tobey gestures Cassy into waiting a moment, then digs four ragtime audio cassettes from inside the piano. She hands the tapes to a surprised Cassy.

TOBEY

Speaking of greats, here're some greats for you to listen to.

Cassy shakes her head up and down.

INT. WASHINGTON HIGH FIRST FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

Jody and Tobey stroll down the corridor.

TOBEY

What do you think?

JODY

About what?

TOBEY  
Cassy Coughlin-Mujica!

Jody stops at her locker and retrieves her books from the bottom of the locker.

JODY  
She's great.

TOBEY  
Yeah, she can really play. I'd like to hear her play my instrument.

With Jody's books now in tow, the walk resumes.

TOBEY (CONT'D)  
But...doesn't she seem a bit...strange to you?

JODY  
Huh?

TOBEY  
Jody, I can't seem to put my finger on it! It's like she's got something to hide...like, uh, a politician running for office. Don't you get that?

JODY  
No. I just think she's shy. And real sweet. And she can really play, Tobey.

TOBEY  
I know...and it's not that I don't like her. I mean, Mom and Dad always tell me to be up front about my feelings.

Tobey reaches her own locker. She removes her books from it.

TOBEY (CONT'D)  
And I feel kind of funny when I meet someone else who doesn't seem to put their cards on the table.

Jody gives Tobey a curious look.

TOBEY (CONT'D)  
I'm glad she's in the band, though.

JODY

Me, too.

Tobey and Jody walk on.

INT. SCOTTS' GARAGE - DAY

Tobey passes copies of instrument-specific sheet music to Lucianna, Cassy, and Jody.

Cassy looks dumbfounded.

CASSY

What good were the tapes?

TOBEY

They're a guide, Cassy. We wanted to let you hear what we wanted to do...we wanted to give you an idea of the sound we're after.

CASSY

Oh.

TOBEY

You did listen to 'em, didn't you, Cass?

CASSY

A little bit.

TOBEY

Oh, boy...what's a little bit?

CASSY

Those cuts...I'm on a time crunch...I'm sorry...don't worry. Learning the rags shouldn't...won't be a problem.

TOBEY

That piece you played for us that you made up was improvised, wasn't it?

CASSY

Oh, no! I wrote it down and memorized it.

Jody looks enchanted.

CASSY (CONT'D)

Don't worry.

(holding up her hand)

I can get this stuff. And I will.

You know "Peacherine Rag?"

TOBEY

Sure. It was on one of the tapes we gave you.

CASSY

That was one of the cuts I listened to. Wanna try it?

With Lucianna on banjo, Jody playing a full drum set, Tobey banging that old upright piano, and Cassy tooting her trumpet, it's Scott Joplin's "Peacherine Rag."

Tobey launches a four-bar intro that brings Jody and Lucianna into the piece.

Twenty bars after drums and banjo come in, trumpet does, too: Cassy's horn solo smacks of polka.

Twenty bars into Cassy's solo, Tobey, Lucianna, and Jody (all three look disarmed) stop playing.

CASSY (CONT'D)

Sorry about that. I know what I did. I'm sorry, and I won't do it anymore.

TOBEY

Yeah...but it was real neat. Strange...but neat. What was it?

CASSY

It was a little bit of "She's Too Fat for Me."

LUCIANNA

What?

CASSY

"She's Too Fat for Me." I was going to do a little...but I went overboard.

JODY

Wow!

CASSY

Since there are bits of polka in the B strain, I thought: "Why not just go on with a polka riff?"

TOBEY

Good idea. But cut it down. You've only got sixteen bars.

Cassy nods.

TOBEY (CONT'D)

By the way, how much did you play "Peacherine Rag?"

CASSY

Once.

And Tobey shakes her head up and down.

INT. JASON WILLIAMS' APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Jason and Tobey sit at his piano as another lesson commences...this time on a Wednesday.

TOBEY

Ever since we found Cassy...well, since she found us, we're having the time of our lives.

JASON

Sounds good, Tobey.

TOBEY

Oh, it's fun, all right, and I love what we're playing. But I'm beginning to wish I'd had three hands.

JASON

Yeah, I know, but if you don't have a bass, your left hand's got to do more.

Tobey and Jason rearrange the sheet music on the piano.

JASON (CONT'D)

Wish I could help, but I don't know anyone in Sioux Falls. You put that ad anywhere else besides school?

TOBEY

Not since summer.

JASON  
Tell you what: Try getting them  
around town. Can't hurt.

TOBEY  
Sounds like a winner.

MONTAGE SEQUENCE

EXT. TENTH AND MAIN STREETS, SIOUX FALLS, SD - DAY

Tobey, armed with copies of her band's new ad, tacks one up  
on a bench at a city bus stop.

INT. RECORD STORE AT EMPIRE MALL - NIGHT

Jody hands a copy of the ad to THE CLERK.

The ad goes like this: "WANTED: BASSIST FOR RAGTIME BAND-  
MUST BE EIGHTEEN OR UNDER. CALL TOBEY AT 336-0001."

EXT. MINNESOTA AVENUE - NIGHT

Lucianna sticks a copy of the same ad on a telephone pole.

INT. WASHINGTON HIGH FIRST FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

Cassy hangs a copy of the same flyer on the bulletin board.

END MONTAGE

INT. TOBEY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The phone RINGS here; Tobey picks it up, and...

INT. SCHUERHOLZES' KITCHEN - NIGHT

...K.D. has the receiver of the kitchen phone to her ear.

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

K.D.  
(into phone)  
Is this Tobey who's looking for a  
bass player?

TOBEY  
Yes...

K.D.  
BLAAAA!

K.D. slams the phone down in Tobey's ear.

TOBEY  
That darned K.D.!

Tobey rests a fist on her chin.

EXT. SCOTTS' HOUSE - NIGHT

A MAN jogs down West Ninth on this day in late September.

INT. TOBEY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tobey watches "Hill Street Blues" on her TV. As soon as the show's plot heats up, Joe Bob walks into her bedroom.

JOE BOB  
Tobey?

TOBEY  
Hi, Dad.

She gestures him into taking a seat on her bed. He does.

JOE BOB  
I hear you've got yourselves a horn now. Sounds like you're doin' all right.

TOBEY  
A trumpet. Cassy Coughlin-Mujica's our trumpet player.

Joe Bob nods.

TOBEY (CONT'D)  
You're gonna meet her pretty soon, Dad. She's real good...but she can never stay past four forty-five.

JOE BOB  
Your mom says it sounds loud in there...in the garage.

TOBEY  
Uh oh.

JOE BOB  
Tobey, don't get the wrong idea. Your mother loves your music. Just digs it! I'm thinkin' 'bout Dr. Meierhenry.

TOBEY

No problem at all. Cassy's been with us for three weeks and we haven't heard word the first from Meierhenry...or his spruce trees.

Tobey jumps up to turn her TV's sound DOWN, then returns to the bed to sit next to Joe Bob.

TOBEY (CONT'D)

Just what is he, anyway?

JOE BOB

He's a plant pathologist.

TOBEY

Oh.

JOE BOB

Haven't you been wonderin' why you haven't heard from him lately?

TOBEY

Well, no...

JOE BOB

Here's why: He's not home. A neighbor kid's been waterin' his plants and feedin' his cats.

TOBEY

You're kidding.

JOE BOB

You've been so busy, Tobey, you haven't noticed. Dr. Meierhenry is in Colorado.

TOBEY

What's he there for?

JOE BOB

Well, some trees in Colorado have survived the blight. And he's out there studyin' 'em.

TOBEY

That's neat.

JOE BOB

Not that neat. He's comin' back soon and now that you've got Cassy and you're still lookin' for a bass player, you could be in a heap of trouble. With him, that is.

Joe Bob pats his daughter on the shoulder.

JOE BOB (CONT'D)

Think about that, will you?

TOBEY

Yeah. But, Dad, we only practice in the afternoons, after school. We're not exactly the Go-Go's.

JOE BOB

I'm just tellin' you.

TOBEY

I understand...thanks.

Tobey kisses her father.

EXT. WASHINGTON HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Books in hand, Tobey hurries out of the building on this October day when ELIZABETH JEANNE "BETSEY" HEMMINGSEN (15, tough-talking; cute) strides up to her.

BETSEY

You Tobey?

TOBEY

Yeah.

BETSEY

I wanna talk to you.

TOBEY

But I'm in a hurry.

Betsey keeps up the pace with the still-hurrying Tobey.

BETSEY

You want a bass player or not?

TOBEY

You mean you?

BETSEY

Yeah. What about it?

TOBEY  
Nothing at all. It's just that  
you've gotta audition.

BETSEY  
Yeah. Okay. Now?

TOBEY  
That's fine. It's at my house. It's  
in the garage out back. Where's  
your bass?

BETSEY  
I'll get it. Where you live?

TOBEY  
1707 West Ninth Street.

BETSEY  
I'll be there.

TOBEY  
You've got to get there fast. We  
quit at four forty-five.

By now, the two teenagers reach:

EXT. WEST TENTH STREET - DAY

And their rather fast pace continues.

BETSEY  
Can't miss the local news, huh?

TOBEY  
It's a long story. What's your  
name?

BETSEY  
Betsey.

TOBEY  
Betsey who?

BETSEY  
Betsey Hemmingsen.

TOBEY  
Funny...I never see you in school.

Betsey flashes an impish grin.

INT. SCOTTS' GARAGE - DAY

Tobey, Cassy, Lucianna, and Jody congregate around their musical instruments.

TOBEY

Well, we did it. We've finally got ourselves a bass player. You've got to meet--

Betsey carries a burlap bag and a small amp into the garage.

TOBEY (CONT'D)

Betsey, glad you could make it...meet our trumpet player, Cassy Coughlin-Mujica; our drummer, Jody Boomsma; and our banjo player, Lucianna Andreucci.

Tobey points to each fellow bandmember while she introduces them to Betsey.

TOBEY (CONT'D)

Everybody...meet Betsey Hemmingsen.

A nodding Betsey pulls out her bass...an old Fender Scotch-taped together in a manner similar to how Eddie Van Halen's guitar stays intact.

She now holds her amp's power cord and looks around.

BETSEY

Hey, where do I plug in?

LUCIANNA

My old toy robot gives more power than that amp. And it runs on batteries!

BETSEY

Oh, yeah?

Tobey elbows Lucianna.

LUCIANNA

Hey...I'm sorry. The outlet's over there...but why don't you plug into my amp?

Betsey walks over to Lucianna's amp and plugs her bass in.

LUCIANNA (CONT'D)

I didn't mean anything by it.

TOBEY  
Whatcha want to do, Betsey?

BETSEY  
Uh...how about "Charleston Rag?"

Tobey's mouth flies open.

TOBEY  
What?

BETSEY  
This is a ragtime band, ain't it?

TOBEY  
Sure is! I think "Charleston Rag's"  
great. In fact, Luci and Cassy are  
working on doing the Charleston to  
it for some choreography. You like  
Eubie Blake?

BETSEY  
My brother says Eubie Blake was the  
greatest ragtimer ever. Bar none.

JODY  
What's your brother play?

BETSEY  
Bass. Same as me. Matter of fact,  
he taught me.

TOBEY  
He could've auditioned with us.

BETSEY  
Are you kidding? At twenty-eight  
years old? He ain't got time to be  
in a band.

Tobey goes to the old upright, Cassy grabs her tenor sax,  
Lucianna grabs her banjo, Betsey does a bass run, and Jody  
works on drum fills. Then:

TOBEY  
All right! One! Two! One! Two!  
Three! Four!

And the five girls launch "Charleston Rag!"

LATER

Everybody but Betsey nods at one another.

JODY

She sure was right on top of the beat.

TOBEY

She heard every change I played.

LUCIANNA

Very...nice.

CASSY

She seems really good.

TOBEY

(to Betsey)

You're in...if you want to be.

BETSEY

(nodding)

You guys make any money?

TOBEY

Not yet. We've just completed our band. Thing we've got to do now is get to work, learn some more songs, learn to work together. Then we can advertise.

Jody shakes her head up and down.

JODY

I think we can start advertising by, oh, Christmas.

TOBEY

Yeah...why don't we try "Charleston Rag" again? See what we can do this time.

The Ragtime Ensemble of Sioux Falls rehearses "Charleston Rag" once more. This time, Cassy and Lucianna try to do the Charleston...and Betsey attempts to dance after sixteen bars.

After thirty-two bars, the garage door flips open.

Walter stands in the doorway.

The music stops.

JODY

Uh oh.

TOBEY

Welcome back, Mr. Meierhenry.

WALTER

Dr. Meierhenry. And this is no welcome at all. I thought you said this wouldn't continue, Tobey.

TOBEY

I did promise there'd be no more firecrackers, Dr. Meierhenry. And there won't be.

(to herself)

It's Senatobia, not Tobey.

WALTER

You'll have to find another place to practice, Tobey. What's more, it's getting colder outside. Aren't you cold?

All five ragtimers shake their heads in the negative.

BETSEY

Who is this man?

TOBEY

Our neighbor, Dr. Meierhenry. He lives...and works...next door.

Betsey eyeballs Walter.

BETSEY

You got a problem, man? Does music bother you or something?

Walter's face freezes.

BETSEY (CONT'D)

Look, keep cool. We're not about to mess up somebody's thing. Right?

Betsey turns to her bandmates.

BETSEY (CONT'D)

So, we'll take care of it.

(to Walter)

Don't worry, man. I'll take care of it.

Walter looks at Tobey...who gazes at Betsey.

TOBEY  
She'll take care of it.

Walter leaves the garage...and Tobey stares even harder at the band's newest member.

BETSEY  
Well, don't look at me!

TOBEY  
Betsey, this is it! Our only practice place!

Lucianna shrugs.

TOBEY (CONT'D)  
How're you gonna take care of the sound?

BETSEY  
I said I'd take care of it and I will. You got my word.

EXT. SCOTTS' GARAGE - DAY

Betsey leans against the garage door and Beverley stands next to her when Tobey, Jody, Lucianna, and Cassy arrive.

BEVERLEY  
(all smiles)  
We have a surprise for you.

TOBEY  
We?

BEVERLEY  
Betsey and I.

Jody, Cassy, Tobey, and Lucianna look confused.

Beverley opens the garage door, and...Betsey's fellow ragtimers find mattresses covering the walls!

BEVERLEY (CONT'D)  
Kills two birds with one stone:  
Insulates and soundproofs the garage.

Betsey nods.

TOBEY  
How...how...what'd you do?

BEVERLEY

Well, this morning, Tobey, after you left for school, I was cleaning the bathroom sink, and I saw something crawling down the driveway toward the garage.

Now Betsey's all smiles.

BEVERLEY (CONT'D)

A mattress...but Betsey is under it! Little ol' Betsey.

Cassy, Lucianna, and Jody eyeball each other.

BEVERLEY (CONT'D)

I went over to the garage soon as she dropped the mattress, and I asked her: "Why're you dropping a mattress in front of our garage? And why aren't you in school? You're just a kid!"

Betsey opens her mouth to talk, but:

BEVERLEY (CONT'D)

Betseeey!  
(to Tobey)  
She just answers the first question; says: "I'm bringing in twelve mattresses, not just one!"

Tobey and Betsey try to get words in...but:

BEVERLEY (CONT'D)

Anyway, Betsey says the mattresses will let Dr. Meierhenry do his thing and the band theirs. She said if she worked all day, she could get five of those mattresses over here before she got home.

Beverley shakes her head "no."

BEVERLEY (CONT'D)

Boy, what an adrenal gland she's got!

BETSEY

(to Tobey)  
Your mom helped me put them up on the walls.

(MORE)

BETSEY (CONT'D)

She borrowed a neighbor's truck and put 'em in here.

TOBEY

Where'd you get 'em?

BETSEY

From abandoned buildings.

TOBEY

Is that where you live?

BETSEY

No! But I know 'em. Used to play there when I was younger. There's a lot of things I know.

BEVERLEY

You know what? Nobody's said "thank you."

Tobey, Lucianna, Cassy, and Jody AD LIB their gratitude.

INT. SCOTTS' GARAGE - DAY

With Lucianna on guitar and her bandmates on their usual instruments, it's "Gimme Dat Ding," by the Pipkins.

Right now, the Ragtime Ensemble of Sioux Falls reaches the refrain after the first verse:

FULL BAND

(singing)

*Gimme dat ding, gimme dat, gimme  
gimme dat./Gimme dat ding, gimme  
dat, gimme gimme dat./Gimme dat  
ding, gimme dat, gimme gimme  
dat./Gimme gimme gimme dat ding.*

Tobey plays a very old-timey-but-good-timey piano solo; in it, Betsey walks all over the scale on her bass...and Cassy plays "responses" on her trumpet.

Then:

FULL BAND (CONT'D)

*Aw, gimme dat ding, gimme dat,  
gimme gimme dat./Gimme dat ding,  
gimme dat, gimme gimme dat./Gimme  
dat ding, gimme dat, gimme gimme  
dat./Gimme gimme gimme dat ding.*

CASSY

*Aw, there goes the metronome.*

The seams split on Betsey's bass...

CASSY (CONT'D)  
*Without it, the bells won't ring.*

...a string breaks...

LUCIANNA  
 (in a deep voice)  
*Right. That's right.*

...and that's the end of Betsey's Fender bass.

Betsey just stands there, broken bass in her hands.

BETSEY  
 It was my brother's bass.

All the music stops.

LUCIANNA  
 Why don't we bury it and give it a nice funeral?

BETSEY  
 In your ear!

Everybody looks at Betsey's dead axe.

LUCIANNA  
 Betsey, it wasn't your fault. It was Scotch-taped together.

BETSEY  
 It was...I was supposed to take care of it!

TOBEY  
 Betsey, what're you going to use now for a bass? You have any money for a new one?

BETSEY  
 Nope!

TOBEY  
 That's what I thought.

LUCIANNA  
 Maybe it's time to let K.D. Schuerholz into the band.

Tobey grabs the remains of Betsey's bass...and gently whacks Lucianna on her posterior.

LUCIANNA (CONT'D)  
Think of all the discounts!

TOBEY  
Come on. Let's think positive.  
Someplace in Sioux Falls, there's a  
bass for Betsey.

BETSEY  
I'll get one.

TOBEY  
How?

BETSEY  
I'll get one.

TOBEY  
Where's your brother?

BETSEY  
None of your damn business!

TOBEY  
It's okay...we're friends...we  
really want to help.

BETSEY  
All right. He's in jail...for petty  
theft. He was caught lifting a  
bass...for me! He wanted me to have  
one so we could both have one and  
he could teach me.

Betsey paces the floor.

BETSEY (CONT'D)  
He goes to jail for trying to get  
me...a bass and I end up with his  
bass. And it breaks...and it's so  
dumb!

TOBEY  
Well, I don't think you'd be stupid  
enough to get one like your brother  
did.

BETSEY  
Yeah.

Tobey turns to Cassy, Jody, and Lucianna.

TOBEY  
Any of you have any money?

Lucianna, Cassy, and Jody shake their heads "no."

TOBEY (CONT'D)  
Me, neither.

CASSY  
But...I have something...

LUCIANNA  
Yeah?

CASSY  
I have an idea.

BETSEY  
What?

CASSY  
I'm a movie buff, and I collect a lot of movie memorabilia. Soundtracks, placards, photographs, books, magazines, everything.

Jody and Tobey look attentive as Cassy continues.

CASSY (CONT'D)  
You know those placards they have at the entrances to theaters? I've got the one promoting "Bambi."

LUCIANNA  
How'd you get that kind of stuff?

CASSY  
An uncle of mine ran a theater here in town, but he had to sell it in the late Sixties, when a lot of downtown theaters across the country were closing down. He got me hooked on movie trivia.

Cassy brightens up.

CASSY (CONT'D)  
What's more, I've got some old "Variety" magazines from 1941-42, around the time Disney made "Bambi."

BETSEY

Cassy, look--

CASSY

I always thought: "Someday, it'd come in handy. Like in an emergency." And this is an emergency.

TOBEY

Cassy, wait a minute--

CASSY

Tobey, I really want to do this. How much can you get a good bass for, Betsey?

BETSEY

Saw a nice bass in a pawn shop downtown, Cassy. The guy let me see it. Wants two hundred. It's a good one.

Cassy nods.

JODY

How much do you think all that "Bambi" memorabilia is worth?

CASSY

Five hundred dollars.

Cassy's bandmates look dumbfounded.

BETSEY

WHERE'S THE GOLD MINE AT?

CASSY

In my attic.

EXT. ANTIQUES AND THEN SOME - DAY

This is a small, well-stuffed store in downtown Sioux Falls.

INT. ANTIQUES AND THEN SOME SALESFLOOR - DAY

A clerk named KAYE KLEINHENZ (20s) waits on Tobey and Cassy. Cassy holds a large box filled with magazines, records, and a placard that's well-wrapped in cellophane.

CASSY  
 Kaye, remember those "Varieties"  
 and that "Bambi" placard I showed  
 you?

KAYE  
 When was that, Cassy?

CASSY  
 Oh, a year and a half ago.

Kaye stares out the store's front window a few seconds.

KAYE  
 You're right!

Cassy puts the box on an old oak dining table next to the  
 counter, then gestures Kaye into looking at the memorabilia.

While Kaye and Cassy exchange glances, Tobey stares out the  
 front window.

KAYE (CONT'D)  
 (nodding at Cassy)  
 You know, this is a lot nicer than  
 I remembered.

CASSY  
 You're kidding.

KAYE  
 You've done a great job of  
 preserving these magazines. And the  
 placard.

CASSY  
 How much would you want for it all?

KAYE  
 You're ready to sell it all?

Cassy nods in authority.

KAYE (CONT'D)  
 What a great job. I'll give you  
 five hundred sixty.

Tobey does a doubletake.

CASSY  
 You're kidding...

KAYE

That's a fair price. But I'll tell you what: Let me give a receipt for the items and you talk it over with your folks.

A FEW CUSTOMERS walk inside the store.

KAYE (CONT'D)

Take your time, and if there's any question, you can have it all back. I'm not selling 'til I hear--

CASSY

No, that's all right, Kaye. Five hundred sixty sounds great.

Cassy and Kaye shake hands...Tobey just shakes.

INT. SCOTTS' GARAGE - DAY

Cassy presents Betsey with that two-hundred-dollar bass and a new amp.

Betsey looks solemn...and grateful.

BETSEY

You know something? All my life, nobody's ever bought me a catcher's mitt or a doll or a new bike or anything. And now here's Cassy, a total stranger--

JODY

She's not a stranger. She's a friend.

BETSEY

(studies the new bass)

One thing's for sure: I'm not gonna forget it.

TOBEY

Me, neither...what a terrific thing to do.

LUCIANNA

All I know is I'd've never done it.

CASSY

Well, the main thing is: Betsey got her axe and we've got a band again.

BETSEY

We've got to rename the band for Cassy.

TOBEY

Huh?

BETSEY

We've got a band again because of Cassy. Let's call it the Cassy Coughlin-Mujica Ragtime Ensemble.

CASSY

No way!

Betsey claps Cassy on the back.

BETSEY

Cassy, you deserve it.

TOBEY

How about...how about Thumpers?

Tobey receives four shocked looks.

TOBEY (CONT'D)

Thumper was a character in "Bambi." And when ragtime music started, it wasn't even called ragtime. Some people called it "piano thumping."

Cassy nods.

LUCIANNA

That makes sense.

BETSEY

Thumpers! I like that...how 'bout you, Cass?

CASSY

I'm really honored.

Cassy takes a bow.

EXT. WASHINGTON HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

It's mid-November...and STUDENTS wear heavier coats to school.

INT. WASHINGTON HIGH FIRST FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

Jody holds a poster while Tobey and Lucianna grab a peek.

JODY  
What do you think?

The poster features a photo of the band in the center. Below the picture is "THUMPERS," and in smaller letters: "NOW ACCEPTING BOOKINGS- CALL: TOBEY SCOTT, 336-0001."

JODY (CONT'D)  
I hope it was all right to use your number on the poster, Tobey.

TOBEY  
Yeah...but all the kids know who we are by now.

JODY  
(shaking her head "no")  
Absolutely nobody knows Betsey. Not even us!

TOBEY  
Yeah! But she's good! They'll think she's a professional.

LUCIANNA  
Hey...did you show Betsey these posters yet, Jody?

JODY  
No...she wasn't out there this morning.

INT. TOBEY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

This Monday night, Tobey watches the NFL game (Pittsburgh at New Orleans) on TV when the phone RINGS. She rushes to get the phone.

TOBEY  
(into phone)  
Hello?

K.D. (V.O.)  
You say Thumpers are ready for gigs?

TOBEY  
Yes, that's right.

K.D. (V.O.)  
Yeah, well, you'll have to do a lot more thumpin' before we'll hire you!

Tobey HEARS the phone slammed down in her ear. She then slams her own phone down.

TOBEY  
K.D. again!

EXT. WASHINGTON HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

During lunchtime, SEVERAL STUDENTS abandon the building and jump into their cars.

INT. WASHINGTON HIGH SCHOOL CAFETERIA - DAY

Tobey, Lucianna, and Jody eat lunch here. (Jody's is a sack lunch.)

TOBEY  
Mindy Kriegmann asked us if we could do a Christmas party.

Jody shakes her head "yes."

TOBEY (CONT'D)  
Her dad owns Jolly Ike's Pizza and Ice Cream Garden on West Forty-First, and he's letting her have the party there. And he's given her fifty dollars for entertainment!

Lucianna looks unimpressed.

LUCIANNA  
That's why she asked us, Tobey. What kind of entertainment can you get for fifty clams? That's ten apiece for the whole night!

TOBEY  
(between bites)  
Lucianna, it's ten more dollars than you've got right now, and it's our first real gig! It'll get us an audience...a much-needed one.

JODY  
(to Lucianna)  
She's making a lot of sense.

TOBEY  
(taking another bite)  
And if we click...and we're gonna...we'll get other jobs!  
(mimics Steve Martin)  
(MORE)

TOBEY (CONT'D)

And the most amazing thing about it  
is...we'll get paid for it!

LUCIANNA

I guess it is amazing.

Lucianna goes back to eating.

EXT. SCOTTS' HOUSE - NIGHT

The porch light's on during this night in early December.

INT. SCOTTS' LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Beverley (she stands) and Joe Bob (he sits on the sofa) watch  
as Tobey meets Jody at the front door.

Tobey wears a red suit, bow tie, and straw hat. Jody's  
outfit: A blue suit, string tie, and derby hat.

TOBEY

Jody, you look like a real ragtime  
pioneer. Love that outfit.

JODY

Thanks. My mom made the jacket.  
Designed it herself.

Jody flashes a knowing smile.

JODY (CONT'D)

I guess it pays to watch those  
"Little House on the Prairie"  
reruns.

Beverley looks on, too...in a bit of pride.

BEVERLEY

Looks great. Boy, I wish I knew how  
to sew like that.

(to Joe Bob)

What do you think of Jody's and  
Tobey's outfits?

JOE BOB

Very nice.

Beverley throws her hands up.

While Jody gestures her appreciation to Joe Bob, Lucianna (in  
a gray suit, 1910s necktie, and fedora) and Cassy (in her  
black suit, ascot tie, and top hat) enter the house.

Beverley eyeballs Cassy and Lucianna.

BEVERLEY

Very nice! Looks like a page out of my old history book.

Cassy's is a huge smile.

CASSY

If I'd been thinking, I'd've brought my hundred-year-old camera.

LUCIANNA

I have trouble enough with a Polaroid.

(looking around)

Hey...where's Betsey? We'll be late!

TOBEY

Yeah! Where in the world is Betsey?

Cassy, Jody, Lucianna, and Tobey eyeball each other.

JODY

She'll show. Think Mindy messed around with the instruments after we set them up?

TOBEY

Are you kidding? She saw how careful we were this afternoon. Especially you, Jody.

JODY

(grinning)

She doesn't have my sticks.

LUCIANNA

Maybe we should go over to Jolly Ike's. Maybe Betsey thought she was to meet us there.

TOBEY

Nope. She's aware of where we're meeting. She's never been late.

BEVERLEY

Did she have anything to wear?

The four teens just gaze at Beverley.

BEVERLEY (CONT'D)  
 When you all decided on the Teddy  
 Roosevelt look, did Betsey say  
 anything?

Tobey stares in space.

TOBEY  
 No...she didn't say anything.

BEVERLEY  
 Where do you think a girl like  
 Betsey would get a  
 suit...especially one that old...or  
 one her size?

TOBEY  
 I never thought about that.

CASSY  
 Me, neither.

LUCIANNA  
 Same place Ricky Schroder does?

JODY  
 You think she wouldn't show up  
 because she doesn't have a suit?  
 She should've said something! We  
 could've worked something out!

Lucianna paces the floor.

LUCIANNA  
 We're in trouble! She's gonna blow  
 it for us...our first gig...down--

JODY  
 Lucianna!

Lucianna stops pacing the floor.

BEVERLEY  
 Lucianna, calm down. Everything'll  
 be all right. Wait a few minutes.

LUCIANNA  
 And then what, Mrs. Scott?

BEVERLEY  
 And then we'll see. Can I get you  
 anything? Pop? Kool-Aid? Milk?

LUCIANNA  
You got a Valium?

Lucianna's request surprises everybody in the room.

TOBEY  
Lucianna!  
(eyeballs Beverley)  
Think I'll have a pop, Mom.

LUCIANNA  
Me, too, Mrs. Scott. You got a  
Twinkie?

BEVERLEY  
Cassy? Jody?

Jody and Cassy shake their heads "no..." then recline on the  
Scotts' sofa.

INT. SCOTTS' KITCHEN - NIGHT

Tobey and Lucianna (the latter eats Twinkie after Twinkie)  
sit at the table, their soft drinks within reach.

JODY (O.S.)  
She's here!

Lucianna and Tobey rush to get to the front door.

INT. SCOTTS' LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jody and Cassy stand at the front door, where Betsey poses in  
a small, hooded raincoat. Her bass is by her side.

BETSEY  
Sorry I'm late.

LUCIANNA  
It's cool.

TOBEY  
Betsey, whatever you have on is  
okay. After all, it's the music,  
not the clothes.

BETSEY  
Yeah, well, how about this?

Betsey unzips her raincoat...and reveals a brown suit, brown  
corduroy pants, a beige shirt, and a Stetson hat.

LUCIANNA  
 (to Betsey)  
 You look nice. You look rugged...

JODY  
 Like Almanzo Wilder.

TOBEY  
 Where'd you get it?

Beverley watches the five Thumpers as they put their winter coats on.

BEVERLEY  
 Good luck tonight!  
 (to Joe Bob)  
 Right, honey?

JOE BOB  
 Uh...right.

Joe Bob catches Beverley's concerned look.

EXT. JOLLY IKE'S PIZZA AND ICE CREAM GARDEN - NIGHT

This good-sized, gaudily-painted restaurant fills up with HIGH-SCHOOL-AGE STUDENTS.

INT. JOLLY IKE'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

MINDY KRIEGMANN (16), who's as casually dressed as the other customers, briefs Betsey, Cassy, Jody, Lucianna, and Tobey.

MINDY  
 Oh, you're late. Some of the kids are here already. You all look great, just like you stepped off the cover of some old sheet music. The instruments are just like you put them in the Jolly Room. Hungry?

It all comes out in one breath.

CASSY  
 (whispers to bandmates)  
 Give me her lung power and I can really blow a horn.

MINDY  
 What we'll do is wait a bit longer for everyone to come and then I'll introduce you. Okay? Want me to introduce you all by name?

(MORE)

MINDY (CONT'D)

(to Betsey)  
Oh...except you?

TOBEY  
No, that's okay. It'd sound better  
if you just give the name of the  
band.

MINDY  
Okay...  
(still looks at Betsey)  
I hope you guys really rock.

Tobey and her fellow Thumpers look puzzled.

INT. JOLLY IKE'S JOLLY ROOM - NIGHT

This is the place for private parties here at the eatery.

Tonight, it resembles a ballroom: Red and green balloons hang  
from the ceiling and the red-and-white-striped walls...a  
large buffet table features appetizers and a punch bowl.

The back of the room sports a bandstand where mikes, their  
stands, and Thumpers' own instruments rest...as does a pre-  
1929 upright piano that's been painted white.

The piano's music rack is off...revealing multicolor strings  
and multicolor hammers.

MORE HIGH SCHOOLERS (most in their everyday duds) stand and  
gab with the five teenage ragtimers.

Tobey pulls Jody by the arm.

TOBEY  
Hey, Jody!

JODY  
What?

TOBEY  
Look...over there by the punch  
bowl.

K.D. (she's in a three-piece suit that features slacks and a  
gaudy necktie) stands by the punch bowl, where she fills her  
cup as if she's got no tomorrow.

JODY  
Oh...

TOBEY  
K.D. Schuerholz.

Jody coaxes Tobey into walking to the stage.

Tobey frowns in K.D.'s direction...to no avail.

Mindy reaches the stage and grabs the center mike.

MINDY  
 (into mike)  
 All right, everybody...here's our  
 entertainment for tonight...let's  
 give a warm welcome to...Jumpers!

As Mindy goes off to blend with the crowd, Tobey, Cassy,  
 Jody, Lucianna, and Betsey hot-foot it to the bandstand.

TOBEY  
 (to Mindy)  
 That's Thumpers!

Thumpers open with a "Music! Music! Music!" that features  
 Lucianna on guitar. The five girls play the opening chords  
 and...no electrical power!

A BOY in front of the stage shouts at the band.

BOY #1  
 Hey, that ain't no Duran Duran!

LUCIANNA  
 Hey!

BETSEY  
 What the hell...

Mindy sprints her way back to the platform.

TOBEY  
 What happened to the amps?

MINDY  
 What the hell is going on?

TOBEY  
 I don't know...maybe the socket's  
 bad. Can we plug in somewhere else?

Cassy goes over to the amps to examine them.

MINDY  
 There's nothing wrong with the  
 socket!

CASSY  
The fuse is missing. In fact, both  
of them. The caps are gone.

TOBEY  
(peering into crowd)  
WHERE'S SCHUERHOLZ?

MINDY  
Look, Tobey, what's going on here?  
Are you gonna play some music or  
not?

TOBEY  
Somebody's stolen our fuses! We're  
not effective without  
amplification...and our amps don't  
work without fuses! Now where's  
K.D. Schuerholz?

Mindy draws a blank look.

TOBEY (CONT'D)  
She was the one who ripped us off!

JODY  
Come on, Tobey. We don't have any  
substantial evidence.

K.D. now stands next to Tobey.

K.D.  
Did you call?

TOBEY  
All right, K.D., fun time's over.  
Let's have those fuses.

K.D.  
Fuses?

TOBEY  
That's right. The ones you took out  
of our amps. A joke's a joke, but  
you've gone far enough. It's not  
fair to Mindy or to us. So cough up  
those fuses...now.

K.D.  
I don't know what you're talking  
about.

TOBEY  
You don't, huh?

K.D. shakes her head sideways.

TOBEY (CONT'D)  
All right, since you're soooo  
innocent, help us out. Call your  
dad and have him get us some new  
ones from his store. He'd do that  
for you, wouldn't he?

Tobey shrugs.

TOBEY (CONT'D)  
Look, my dad'll even go over there  
to pick 'em up.

K.D.  
My father's not here. He and my  
mother are in Minneapolis...taking  
in a play. They won't be back 'til  
late. I'd really like to help you,  
Tobey, but there isn't anything I  
can do.

Tobey gives K.D. a dirty look.

EXT. JOLLY IKE'S PIZZA AND ICE CREAM GARDEN - NIGHT

Tobey, Cassy, Jody, Betsey, and Lucianna stand in the parking  
lot with their drums, horns, and strings.

BETSEY  
(to Tobey)  
You really think it was Schuerholz?

TOBEY  
Doggone right. I know it was.

LUCIANNA  
Same here. Did you see her baby  
blue eyes when you put it to her?

TOBEY  
Doggone right she did it.

BETSEY  
Don't you worry 'bout a thing. I'll  
get her.

TOBEY  
Don't you dare. You're in enough  
trouble over that suit.

BETSEY  
I told you the suit's borrowed!

Tobey feels Betsey's suit.

TOBEY  
You know, we could've worked  
something out...or could've lent  
you something. You didn't have to  
steal anything.

A 1983 Ford van pulls up; all five Thumpers jump in.

BETSEY  
I didn't steal any damn suit!

MONTAGE SEQUENCE

INT. FORD VAN - NIGHT

Betsey taps Greg (the driver) on the shoulder...to get him to  
make a stop.

EXT. WEST THIRTIETH STREET APARTMENTS - NIGHT

Betsey walks toward the building...and gains entrance.

INT. FORD VAN - NIGHT

Tobey, Cassy, Lucianna, Jody, and Greg look surprised.

EXT. WEST THIRTIETH STREET APARTMENTS - NIGHT

Betsey reappears...this time, in her own clothes: Jeans,  
dirty jacket, and baseball cap.

EXT. COUGHLIN-MUJICAS' HOUSE - NIGHT

This ranch-style house has all its lights on tonight.

INT. FORD VAN - NIGHT

Cassy's face shows worry.

EXT. COUGHLIN-MUJICAS' HOUSE - NIGHT

The front door opens...and reveals Cassy's mom, WESLEY MARIE  
COUGHLIN-MUJICA (40s), who waves at the van.

INT. FORD VAN - NIGHT

Cassy waves goodbye to Jody, Greg, and Tobey...then trudges out of the van without her horns!

Jody and Tobey look dumbfounded as they watch Cassy walk toward the house.

END MONTAGE

INT. SCOTTS' LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Tobey and Betsey stand behind the front door; Betsey's bass and the two fuseless amps rest next to the two girls.

Joe Bob and Beverley saunter over to the duo.

BEVERLEY

Your fuses, huh? You really think it was that Schuerholz girl? I can't believe it!

TOBEY

Mom, I'm sure it was K.D., but I just couldn't prove it...anyway, it's all over now.

Joe Bob shakes his head left and right.

JOE BOB

Tobey, that's the way of the world.

TOBEY

I know, Dad.

JOE BOB

It's not the last gig in the world, Tobey.

BEVERLEY

Your father's right. It's not the last gig in the world, so cheer up and wait for the next one.

(to Joe Bob)

Tell her about the time you got sabotaged in North Platte. Back in '71.

JOE BOB

Again?

INT. TOBEY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The host now reclines in bed while guest Betsey occupies a sleeping bag.

TOBEY

Listen, Betsey, I'm sorry I didn't believe you...that your suit wasn't stolen.

BETSEY

I didn't say it wasn't stolen, Tobey.

TOBEY

You did!

BETSEY

No, I said I didn't steal it! There's a big difference!

TOBEY

Yeah?

BETSEY

My brother has a cellmate who knows these people. They fence things. One week, it's meat...big chunks of cow, sides of beef. Next week, it's TVs or stereos or watches or something.

TOBEY

This week, it's--

BETSEY

Men's suits. Best quality. Wool...sharkskin. Anyway, it's next week, not this. I got the jump on it. Had my pick.

Tobey's mouth flies open.

BETSEY (CONT'D)

Boy, am I glad they had one for me!

TOBEY

So you went to their apartment--

BETSEY

Their suite of apartments. Changed there.

(MORE)

BETSEY (CONT'D)

Had to get the suit back before the next day, though. That was the deal.

Now Tobey sits up in her bed.

BETSEY (CONT'D)

My brother fixed it for me. I don't know what he had to do, but you can believe it cost him!

TOBEY

Yeah, but, Betsey--

BETSEY

I didn't steal it, Tobey. Someone else did!

Tobey shrugs and goes to sleep.

A few seconds later, Betsey goes to sleep, too.

EXT. SCOTTS' HOUSE - DAY

Snow blazes through Sioux Falls.

INT. TOBEY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Tobey answers the phone:

TOBEY

Hello?

INT. BETSEY'S SISTER'S BEDROOM - DAY

K.D.'s on the other end...as a visitor in the house where Betsey lives.

K.D.

I got you another party!

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

TOBEY

Huh?

K.D.

I apologize for the dirty trick I played on you at Mindy's party. I took the fuses out while the kids were taking off their coats and walking around and getting punch and all that.

K.D. pauses for breath.

PULLING BACK reveals Betsey seated alongside K.D.

K.D. (CONT'D)  
 And to prove I'm sorry, I'm having  
 a Christmas party of my own and  
 inviting you to play.

K.D. cups the phone's mouthpiece and turns to Betsey.

K.D. (CONT'D)  
 There. That good enough?  
 (into phone)  
 So, is it now all right, Tobey?

TOBEY  
 What's the catch, K.D.?

K.D.  
 No catch. The party's this Friday  
 night. It's informal.

TOBEY  
 You're telling me a story.

K.D. cups the mouthpiece again; she AD LIBS to Betsey, who finally takes the phone.

BETSEY  
 It's legit. Tell the others.

INT. SCOTTS' GARAGE - DAY

The five young ragtimers stand around the old upright piano.

TOBEY  
 (to Betsey)  
 How'd you do it?

BETSEY  
 You're not gonna believe me.

LUCIANNA  
 Try us.

BETSEY  
 You're still not gonna believe me.

CASSY  
 Betsey, we want to know.

BETSEY

All right, but you still won't believe it.

Lucianna looks annoyed.

BETSEY (CONT'D)

I cornered her on her way to school, and I told her if she didn't come with me, I'd kick her butt right there in front of the passing cars on Main Street.

TOBEY

So...she went, huh?

BETSEY

Darn right! She was shaking like a bunch of leaves in the wind.

JODY

Where'd you take her?

BETSEY

I took her home. Where I live. With my sister.

Betsey, Tobey, and Jody take seats on the piano bench.

BETSEY (CONT'D)

My sister works, so she wasn't home. I locked Schuerholz and me in my sister's room. She's got a room of her own.

Cassy and Lucianna move in closer to their colleagues.

BETSEY (CONT'D)

I sleep on the couch in the living room. Then I turned on my brother's tape recorder and made Schuerholz play.

LUCIANNA

She can't play!

BETSEY

She can play five simple little riffs, but she has to figure 'em out.

TOBEY

But that's not playing...

BETSEY

That's putting it mildly! She can't even get most of 'em right! So I taped her, screeching and groaning, and I made her sing.

LUCIANNA

Sing...

BETSEY

Yeah. Sing to her chords. Then I hooked the machine up to the amp. I plugged the output of the tape recorder into the input of the amp and turned up the amp real loud and played it back to her.

TOBEY

You played back the tape you made of her playing and singing?

BETSEY

If you call that singing and playing, yeah. I played it back in her face...so loud I'm surprised you guys didn't hear it over here.  
(nodding)

My ears are shattered...I hope I can still play.

JODY

So you stayed with her?

BETSEY

I had to, or else she could've just shut it off. Can you just hear it? A tape of K.D. Schuerholz playing? Over and over and over and over? Loud?

LUCIANNA

Torture!

BETSEY

Yeah. For me and for her. I kept yelling: "You wanna play in a band, Schuerholz? You want people to hear this? Listen up, girl!"

JODY

(giggling)

That was inhuman to do to her.

LUCIANNA

Yeah.

CASSY

I think it was brilliant.

TOBEY

Well, she had it coming.

BETSEY

I told her she'd have to stay there and listen to herself unless she could think of a way to make it up to us for Mindy's party. And she did...she thought of having one herself.

And Betsey grins.

EXT. SCHUERHOLZES' HOUSE - NIGHT

The area around this nice-looking house teems with cars.

INT. SCHUERHOLZES' BASEMENT - NIGHT

In this well-furnished basement, Cassy grabs her trumpet and Lucianna straps on her banjo...and Tobey sits at the Schuerholzes' spinet piano.

Betsey straps her bass on as Jody watches from behind her drum set.

Tobey eyeballs THE TEENAGE THRONG.

TOBEY

(mimics Johnny Cash)

Hello, we're Thumpers.

Thumpers launch into "Darktown Strutters' Ball."

Right from the start, the teenage razzberries fly...starting with one from the boy from the Jolly Ike's party:

BOY #1

Hey! What song is that?

BOY #2

I never heard of any of that stuff you're playing!

GIRL #1

Come on, Tobey! Don't you know any Cars?

BOY #3  
Do Springsteen!

GIRL #2  
Play some Quiet Riot!

GIRL #3  
How about some Prince?

The ragtimers stop the music.

TOBEY  
Listen...we wanted to do something  
different. This is good music. You  
like the horns and stuff?

ANOTHER BOY studies the Ragtime Five.

BOY #4  
Yeah...you play all right, but  
can't you rock?

LATER

Thumpers pack their instruments.

TOBEY  
(almost to herself)  
These kids have no taste.

JODY  
Yeah. I like rock...but they  
wouldn't recognize something good  
if it came up and kicked 'em in  
their butts.

Guitar case in one hand and banjo case in the other, Lucianna  
leans against a wall.

LUCIANNA  
So? Maybe we learned something.

TOBEY  
What?

LUCIANNA  
We're good musicians, right? Good  
musicians can play anything. If the  
kids want rock, then they'll get  
rock. Good rock.

TOBEY  
We don't play rock!

BETSEY

We play rock, we sell out. Show me  
some good rock and I'll show you--

LUCIANNA

There's some good rock. Plenty.

Jody slowly nods.

TOBEY

Yeah, but Lucianna, we started out  
playing ragtime so that we could be  
different. Why march backwards?

LUCIANNA

We need an audience!

JODY

How do you feel about this, Cassy?

CASSY

Maybe we can bend a little...one of  
the first things we wanted to do  
was pull some surprises. Maybe we  
can do some rock songs as rags.

Tobey grabs Lucianna's guitar case as Jody, Cassy, and Betsey  
pick up their own instruments.

Greg and K.D. enter the basement; the former helps his  
daughter with the drum set.

TOBEY

Sorry we bombed, K.D.

K.D.

Bombed? You were great!

BETSEY

Great your butt!

K.D.

Anyone could tell even from the rag  
and roll that you guys were real  
musicians. And the stuff you did at  
the beginning...it was terrific!

BETSEY

You really dug that, huh?

K.D.

Yeah!  
(with a sharp nod)  
(MORE)

K.D. (CONT'D)

You were right, Tobey. I guess I wasn't good enough to be in your band.

Tobey nods.

BETSEY

(to K.D.)

Well, that's okay. We're even now.

CASSY

You really like ragtime, K.D.?

K.D.

Sure! Matter of fact...I still think there's a place for me with your band.

TOBEY

K.D., don't start that again--

K.D.

I don't mean playing!

LUCIANNA

What else is there?

K.D.

You don't have a manager, do you?

TOBEY

Huh?

CASSY

A manager! No, we don't, do we, Tobey?

K.D.

Can I be your manager? Can I?

TOBEY

I guess you'd make a good manager...I'm glad you liked our music...even if your guests weren't all that turned on by it...

K.D.

Tobey, don't worry about a thing. Maybe the kids aren't your audience...but I'll find you one.

INT. SCOTTS' LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Tobey and a robe-clad Beverley sit on the sofa.

BEVERLEY  
You down in the dumps again, Tobey?

TOBEY  
Hi, Mom.

BEVERLEY  
What's wrong?

TOBEY  
Nothing, really.

BEVERLEY  
Don't tell me the fuses got taken  
again?

TOBEY  
Nope.

BEVERLEY  
Betsey all right?

TOBEY  
Yep.

BEVERLEY  
Was the piano out of tune?

TOBEY  
Nope.

BEVERLEY  
You can tell me, Tobey. What  
happened?

TOBEY  
Mom...I just want to be alone a  
little while.

Beverley watches Tobey go upstairs.

INT. SCOTTS' UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

On the way to her own room, Tobey sees Joe Bob, who reads  
today's "Argus Leader" in his and Beverley's bedroom.

He sets the newspaper aside and meets Tobey in the hallway.

JOE BOB  
Hey, Tobey.

TOBEY  
Hello, Dad.

JOE BOB  
All right?

TOBEY  
Yeah. I'm all right.

JOE BOB  
Night.

TOBEY  
Night, Dad.

Tobey and Joe Bob wave, then she goes into:

INT. TOBEY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

She shuts the door.

Within a few seconds, Tobey finds A SOFT KNOCK on that door.

BEVERLEY (O.S.)  
Want a piece of cake?

TOBEY  
No thanks, Mom.

Beverley cracks the door ajar and peers at Tobey through the crack.

BEVERLEY  
It's German chocolate.

TOBEY  
No thanks.

BEVERLEY  
What?

TOBEY  
No!

Now Beverley walks all the way in with a plate with a piece of that cake on it.

TOBEY (CONT'D)  
Mom, I don't want any.

BEVERLEY  
I couldn't understand you through the door. Here.

Beverley shoves the plate toward Tobey.

BEVERLEY (CONT'D)

Try it...females have as much of a right to eat in this country as males...regardless of what Richard Simmons says.

Tobey shrugs, takes the plate...and with the provided fork, digs in.

TOBEY

Thanks.

BEVERLEY

Any time.

TOBEY

(mouth full)

Mom, the kids don't like our style. They really want to hear rock.

BEVERLEY

It's...you play good music.

(sits on bed)

Darn good music.

Tobey takes a seat on her bed.

TOBEY

Thanks...it's just that they want rock. They want their own familiar beat. Lucianna thinks we should play what they want. Cassandra thinks we should compromise.

BEVERLEY

How about you?

TOBEY

I don't even want...to, but how're we gonna work?

BEVERLEY

Hmmmm...

TOBEY

You got any ideas, Mom?

As Tobey takes another bite, Beverley hugs her.

BEVERLEY

Here's my idea: Every week, I drive my extremely-talented daughter way down to Vermillion to study with an expert.

Beverley squeezes Tobey, who sets her plate down.

BEVERLEY (CONT'D)

Seems like a good idea to get some expert advice from this expert. Right?

TOBEY

Ask Jason? Right!

EXT. WEST DUKE STREET APARTMENTS, VERMILLION, SD - DAY

Snow covers the area around the building.

INT. JASON WILLIAMS' APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Tobey sits at Jason's grand piano, while Jason himself leans with one elbow on top of the instrument.

JASON

I thought you'd run up against something like this.

TOBEY

You did? Why didn't you tell me?

JASON

I'm not a Las Vegas handicapper. I can't predict your problems in advance.

Tobey shakes her head "yes."

JASON (CONT'D)

But you're not the first to run up against a wall like this. Mozart did. Bizet did. I could go on...but we couldn't get in any lesson time.

Jason takes a seat next to his Sioux Falls student.

JASON (CONT'D)

See, Tobey, this is an age-old artistic decision you've got to make here: Do you want to play the music you like...or do you want to be cool and hip?

TOBEY

Well, I...

JASON

Now, there's nothing wrong with being popular. It's fun, but if you've got to compromise your artistic temperament to do it, then you'll have to decide whether it's worth it or not.

Tobey catches Jason's nod.

JASON (CONT'D)

I used to be a blues singer.

TOBEY

Yeah. You told me.

JASON

The critics told me I could've been another Ivory Joe Hunter. Even though I couldn't sell that one record, they told me I put on quite a show.

Jason shows a more enthusiastic look.

JASON (CONT'D)

Used to pack this bar on the South Side of Chicago...even broke Koko Taylor's record.

TOBEY

What'd they say when you quit?

JASON

They told me I was stoned out of my mind.

TOBEY

Because you wanted to teach, not play?

JASON

Yep. I don't get the recognition...or the money...as before.

TOBEY

But you're happier.

JASON  
 Are you kidding? I've never been  
 happier than I am now.

Tobey leans back with a nod.

JASON (CONT'D)  
 But what I'm trying to get at is:  
 What's right for one person might  
 not be right for another. You might  
 be happier trying for Koko Taylor's  
 record. Right, Tobey?

Tobey nods in agreement...but follows that with a blank look.

TOBEY  
 Who's Koko Taylor?

Jason's eyes light up.

EXT. SCOTTS' HOUSE - DAY

Snow barrels its way through Sioux Falls.

INT. SCOTTS' GARAGE - DAY

Tobey, Lucianna, Cassy, Jody, and Betsey sit among (or at)  
 their instruments.

LUCIANNA  
 Well, it still wouldn't hurt to put  
 some rock tunes into our  
 repertoire. Like I said, we can get  
 the older folks easily. It's the  
 kids.

JODY  
 I like what we've been doing.

TOBEY  
 Well, I talked to Jason, and he  
 said you've gotta do what you feel  
 comfortable with. I like what we're  
 doing now...but if we were to  
 change, we'd have to give up a lot  
 of artistic integrity.

K.D. (in a green down jacket, super-long scarf, and wool hat)  
 enters the garage.

TOBEY (CONT'D)  
 So...I say let's keep on doing what  
 we're doing.

Betsey turns to K.D.

BETSEY  
You look like you're on a leash.

K.D.  
Got a booking for you.

TOBEY  
What is it? What is it?

K.D.  
My father's got a New Year's Eve party every year. It's in the afternoon and it's for his employees and their families and his regular customers.

Now K.D. takes off her jacket.

K.D. (CONT'D)  
He always opens up the main studio in back for it. And he wants to get Thumpers to play.

Nobody speaks for a few seconds...then:

JODY  
Is that right?

CASSY  
Playing ragtime?

K.D.  
Yes. He heard you at our house. He thinks you're great!

Tobey, Cassy, Jody, Lucianna, and Betsey eye each other for a few seconds.

Then they congratulate K.D.

EXT. SCHUERHOLZ'S MUSIC CENTER - DAY

This good-sized business on Main Street is marked by a pair of large windows.

INT. SCHUERHOLZ'S MUSIC CENTER MAIN STUDIO - DAY

A LARGE CROWD OF MOSTLY ADULTS (with SOME SCHOOL-AGE KIDS) enjoys refreshments and indulges in AD LIBBED chit chat.

The listeners are casually dressed...and Thumpers wear their everyday school clothes.

Store owner BRENT SCHUERHOLZ (late 30s), a mike in his hands, stands onstage.

Brent signals Jody, who responds with a thunderous drum roll that ends with a cymbal crash.

BRENT  
(into mike)  
Ladies and gentlemen...I want you  
to relax and enjoy the amazing, the  
rousing, the delightfully different  
sound of Sioux Falls' very  
own...Thumpers!

After the applause erupts, the five girls launch Jelly Roll Morton's "Perfect Rag."

Tobey (on a 1900-29 upright piano whose hammers stand exposed) bangs out the intro...which leads to Jody, Betsey, and banjoist Lucianna jumping right in.

Sixteen bars later, Cassy plays a sixteen-bar trombone solo.

The crowd's excited...fired up!

LATER

Betsey, Cassy, Jody, Lucianna, and Tobey perform the finale, "Goody Goody," on a 1900-29 upright piano each. (The hammers stand exposed on all five old pianos.)

All five ragtimers end "Goody Goody" with a bang...and set off a heavy amount of audience applause.

The guests come up to the teens and nearly bowl them over.

WOMAN #1  
Terrific!

MAN #1  
Boy, you girls are wonderful!

MAN #2  
Are you sure you're teenagers?

WOMAN #2  
I just love those horns you play!  
Say, aren't you the, uh, Coughlin-  
Mujica girl?

A still-radiant Tobey eyeballs Cassy...whose face falls apart all at once.

CASSY

Uh...

WOMAN #2

Aren't you Dr. Mujica's girl?

Jody points to Woman #2.

JODY

(almost interjecting)

Did you really like the horns?  
Helps make our sound, don't you think?

WOMAN #2

Yes, it does.

Now Jody moves over to Cassy.

JODY

Don't worry. Nobody connected a thing.

Jeffery and his mom, MARGERY KUEHL (40s), stroll over to Betsey and Tobey.

JEFFERY

Very nice, Thumpers!

TOBEY

Thanks, Jeffery!

MARGERY

I'm having a party Friday night,  
and I was wondering if your band  
would play. It's a post-New Year's  
party.

Tobey turns to the other ragtime gals.

TOBEY

Jody? Lucianna? Cassy? You hear  
that? Friday night okay?

BETSEY

Yeah!

Cassy, Lucianna, and Jody nod in agreement.

TOBEY  
 (to Margery)  
 You bet! Where do you live?

Margery yanks a pencil and a piece of paper from her purse and writes down the Kuehls' address.

MARGERY  
 I just love you kids.

TOBEY  
 Thanks!

Jeffery and Margery congratulate each other.

Cassy stuffs her trumpet, trombone, and tenor saxophone into their cases.

To try to beat Cassy to the door, Tobey jumps in the way.

TOBEY (CONT'D)  
 Cass! Hold up!

CASSY  
 Tobey, I--

TOBEY  
 No! Wait! Please--

Jody, Lucianna, and Betsey join Cassy and Tobey at the door. A few seconds later, K.D. joins the confab.

K.D.  
 Anything wrong?

CASSY  
 K.D., is there a place we can talk...away from the party?

INT. SCHUERHOLZ'S MUSIC CENTER OFFICE - DAY

Sioux Falls' youngest ragtime band and its manager stand among the furniture in this small office.

TOBEY  
 Cassy, what in the world is with you?

Cassy takes a deep breath while K.D. closes the door.

CASSY

I didn't mean to make a big deal out of this...but the thing is: My parents don't know I'm playing in a band.

BETSEY

They don't, huh?

TOBEY

Where'd they think you were all this time?

CASSY

They thought I went to a party...which I did.

TOBEY

How about rehearsals? Where do they think you go then?

CASSY

My parents work. My father's a doctor and my mother's a computer programmer. She doesn't get home until a bit after five--

TOBEY

So that's why you've gotta be home by five. But why can't you just tell them you play in a--

JODY

Tobey, would you please let her finish?

CASSY

I'm a classical musician.

JODY

(to Tobey)

She's a real live prodigy.

Cassy looks embarrassed.

BETSEY

Is that right?

CASSY

(nodding)

Thing is, when Mom comes in at five, I've got to be in my room playing the classics.

(MORE)

CASSY (CONT'D)

I've studied for years...Mom wants that to be my career.

LUCIANNA

Yeah, but wouldn't they be proud of you doing other things?

CASSY

Not my mother or father. The band is like The Great Escape to me. This is something I want to do. When I saw your ad at school, Tobey, I knew I had to try.

Tobey perks up.

CASSY (CONT'D)

I've never played this type of music before or played in a band before. I wanted to learn and be...you know...

JODY

One of the crowd.

Cassy watches Tobey chuckle.

CASSY

Yeah. When I play at parties, I lower the horns from a window on strings.

TOBEY

So that's why you freaked out when your mom waited up for you after the party at Jolly Ike's.

CASSY

And that's why I gave my horns to Jody...have you guys ever heard of Toots Coughlin?

TOBEY

I think he's a famous Dixieland trumpet player.

CASSY

Right...see, he was my grandfather.

BETSEY

You're kidding!

CASSY

I'm not! But don't even mention him to my mother. See, he was famous, all right...so famous he never knew his family was alive.

Betsey shakes her head "yes."

CASSY (CONT'D)

At least according to Mom. Spent half his life on the road, the other half in bars. Mom says one time, she was hanging onto him and he was dragging her halfway down the street.

Tobey's nod is a slow one.

CASSY (CONT'D)

As he was about to pull out of town again, with her screaming and yelling and crying and begging him not to go.

Lucianna breathes heavily.

CASSY (CONT'D)

He finally got his recognition after he died in 1965...but my mother still didn't appreciate him.

Cassy shakes her head sideways.

CASSY (CONT'D)

When I was seven and starting to bang on the piano and starting to play toy horns, begging for a real horn, she got upset.

BETSEY

Yep.

CASSY

Anyway, Mom let me study...classical.

TOBEY

(to Cassy)

I guess she thought you'd end up like Toots if you played in a band with your buddies.

JODY

Well, since we've got a couple of weekends to tune up for, we can take precautions...maybe we can all start wearing bonnets.

TOBEY

They won't recognize you, Cass. A million-to-one odds.

Cassy stares in space for a few seconds.

CASSY

I really don't want to quit your band.

JODY

Good!

Cassy, Betsey, Lucianna, and K.D. AD LIB goodbyes on the way out of the office.

JODY (CONT'D)

That's great, Tobey.

TOBEY

Yeah. But I've gotta ask you something, Jody.

JODY

Yeah?

TOBEY

Did you know all along about Cassy?

JODY

Not all along.

TOBEY

Just when you started becoming friends, huh?

JODY

I couldn't spill the beans when she asked me not to. I didn't really want to keep secrets from you, Tobey, but it really wasn't my secret...it was Cassy's.

TOBEY

I understand.

JODY  
And besides, would you tell your  
friends you're a genius?

TOBEY  
She's a genius?

JODY  
She studies with...I forget  
who...but someday, everybody'll  
hear about her...everybody.

TOBEY  
Everybody, huh?

JODY  
You're not mad at me, are you,  
Tobey? Are we still friends?

TOBEY  
We're still friends...Jody, we were  
great today, weren't we?

Jody and Tobey leave the office.

MONTAGE SEQUENCE

EXT. KUEHLS' HOUSE - NIGHT

The area around this modest house teems with cars.

INT. KUEHLS' BASEMENT - NIGHT

Jody watches Cassy sneak in the house through the basement  
door. (Both girls wear bonnets and 1890s dresses.)

The drummer helps the horn player up the stairs.

INT. KUEHLS' LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

With Thumpers playing numbers like "Mississippi Rag," the  
party's a success.

K.D. hands Margery a business card. They shake hands.

A smiling Margery passes the card to HER GUESTS.

EXT. KLIMENTS' HOUSE - NIGHT

Brad lives in this bigger, nice-looking abode not too far  
from the Kuehl family's place.

INT. KLIMENTS' LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

This time, at another party, Thumpers wear various shirt-slacks combinations along with slouch hats.

When the band finishes "Trilby Rag," Brad and HIS FATHER (50s) gesture to PARTYGOERS...and head upstairs.

LATER

Brad and his dad come back downstairs...with THE REST OF THE FAMILY (Brad's four siblings...all in pajamas).

And Thumpers jump into "Peacherine Rag."

END MONTAGE

EXT. SCOTTS' HOUSE - DAY

A HEAVILY-DRESSED COUPLE walk by on this frigid January day.

INT. SCOTTS' LIVING ROOM - DAY

Joe Bob watches TV from a lounge chair when Tobey enters...with a wad of money in her grip.

TOBEY

Here, Dad.

JOE BOB

(eyeballing the stash)  
Senatobia...what's this?

TOBEY

I owe you this for that old upright  
you bought me.

Joe Bob raises his eyeballs and now eyeballs Tobey.

JOE BOB

That's a lot of bread, Tobey.

TOBEY

Yes, it is.  
(hands money to Joe Bob)  
Thanks for backing me.

A surprised-and-delighted Joe Bob accepts the loot.

JOE BOB

Tobey...you're a fine, upstandin'  
young woman.

He gives her a kiss.

                  TOBEY  
Thanks, Dad.

                  JOE BOB  
Tobey, I want you to take out the  
garbage. It's in a bag near the  
back door.

                  TOBEY  
          (nodding)  
All right, Dad.

Tobey walks toward the back door.

INT. SCOTTS' GARAGE - DAY

The five ragtimers take a break from rehearsal.

                  CASSY  
Tobey, I've really got the blues.

                  TOBEY  
Why?

                  CASSY  
My parents said how nice it was I  
was getting invited to all these  
parties.

                  BETSEY  
And it is.

                  CASSY  
But I feel guilty.

                  BETSEY  
You ain't doing nothing wrong.

                  LUCIANNA  
          (to Betsey)  
You oughta know.

Betsey eyeballs Lucianna before turning back to Cassy.

                  BETSEY  
I mean it, Cass. You're not doing  
anything wrong...just making an  
honest buck playing music and  
having fun. If your folks can't see  
that, then it's their problem, not  
yours.

CASSY

That's what I keep telling myself,  
but I still feel guilty...not  
guilty enough to quit, though!

Tobey observes Betsey's huge smile.

BETSEY

By the way...have to ask you  
something.

TOBEY

Ask me what?

BETSEY

A favor.

TOBEY

Okay.

BETSEY

It's a big favor.

TOBEY

Okay.

BETSEY

You probably won't wanna do it.

LUCIANNA

Probably not, Betsey.

JODY

What is it?

BETSEY

Forget it.

JODY

Betsey...

CASSY

You can tell us.

BETSEY

Nah...

TOBEY

Elizabeth!

BETSEY

It's my brother...

JODY  
Betsey, spill the beans.

BETSEY  
It's his birthday next week.

TOBEY  
You want to get him a present?

BETSEY  
Sort of.

TOBEY  
What kind of present?

BETSEY  
Maybe we can play for him...at the jail. If they'd let us...which they probably won't.

Dead silence for a few moments...until:

JODY  
A concert at the jail! That's a great idea!

EXT. MINNESOTA AVENUE - '83 FORD VAN - DAY

Greg's van heads away from downtown Sioux Falls.

INT. FORD VAN - DAY

On this February day, Cassy, Jody, K.D., Lucianna, Tobey, and a worried Betsey wear their school clothes and winter coats.

BETSEY  
You think the place'll be big enough? Is there enough lighting? I hope those amps'll carry...hope we look right. Boy.

LUCIANNA  
Knock it off, Betsey. We've done it before.

BETSEY  
Not for Ellis.

CASSY  
We'll be very, very good for this one, Betsey. We'll never be this good again.

TOBEY

Cassy...don't say that!

EXT. SOUTH DAKOTA STATE PENITENTIARY - DAY

This formidable-looking prison farm stands across the street from the Sioux Falls Municipal Airport.

INT. PENITENTIARY CORRIDOR - DAY

Greg and the teenagers go through large glass doors and metal gates...then must put their gear through a metal detector...as if across the street at the airport.

The six visitors must empty their pockets and turn in their purses (if they've got any purses).

It all makes five teens and one adult look uncomfortable.

Betsey's the exception.

K.D., Greg, and the band walk through two more gates; finally, the seven arrive at the:

INT. PENITENTIARY GYM - DAY

They walk into a huge, empty gym.

LATER

Fender bass in her hands, Betsey stands atop a piano bench that Tobey stands next to on the bandstand.

The twosome look out at a gym packed with INMATES and STAFF...and Betsey recognizes her brother ELLIS HEMMINGSEN (28). He's got yet to react to Betsey's presence, though.

Betsey jumps off the bench; Tobey moves it over to a 1960-84 studio piano whose hammers are exposed.

Elsewhere on the bandstand, Cassy (with her several horns), Jody (behind her drum set), and Lucianna (guitar in hands) tune up.

Tobey takes a seat on the piano bench, where she AD LIBS a prayer...that casually-dressed NORM WENDRYHOSKI (60s), the jail's chaplain, breaks up.

NORM

(into mike)

Let's give a big round of applause for...Thumpers!

Norm leaves the stage while the gym rocks with applause. When the cheers die, Thumpers launch a ragged-up version of "Happy Birthday to You."

FULL BAND  
 (singing, too)  
*Happy birthday to you, /Happy  
 birthday to you, /Happy birthday,  
 dear Ellis...*

Ellis rises from his seat in the bleachers...and slaps his cheek in happy disbelief.

FULL BAND (CONT'D)  
*Happy birthday to youuuu!*

Ellis receives stares from an applauding audience.

ELLIS  
 Oh, man...oh, man...

LATER

The ragtime teens tear the gym down with "Kitten on the Keys," where Tobey plays that 1960-84 piano...and Jody and Lucianna play a 1890-1929 upright piano whose hammers also stand exposed.

The setup finds Cassy on drums and a smiling Betsey on bass.

Now the gig ends...the audience applauds...the teens wave and the crowd waves back...Norm waves back, too.

BETSEY  
 Thanks, you guys, thanks!

TOBEY  
 (eyeballing Betsey)  
 Sure was fun...loved it.

Betsey's face shows an even wider smile.

AN OFFICER goes straight to Norm and the jail's warden, JAMES UNTERMEYER (50s).

James frowns, nods, then leaves the gym...while Tobey, Jody, Lucianna, Cassy, Betsey, K.D., and Greg drink orange juice.

TOBEY (CONT'D)  
 Where'd the warden go? Something happen?

NORM

You're really sharp, Tobey.

TOBEY

Well, I've never been to jail before. Just wanted to see if it's like it is on TV.

JODY

Where is the warden?

NORM

Nothing serious happened, Tobey and Jody. Nothing big...at least not today...except, we think, an appendicitis. One of the men collapsed on the way back to his cell.

BETSEY

Ellis?

NORM

No. Someone else.

TOBEY

Whew!

Greg, K.D., and the five Thumpers collect their instruments while AD LIBBED comments from the inmates fill the gym.

Now a gate opens. Thumpers and their two-person entourage move against the wall as TWO MEN carry a stretcher through the door.

TOBEY (CONT'D)

Norm, if it wasn't for Ellis, Betsey wouldn't have started playing the bass.

NORM

(with a laugh)

Everybody here knows that, Tobey!

James addresses DENNIS MUJICA (40s).

JAMES

So it was an appendicitis, huh, Doc?

DENNIS

It was an appendicitis.

Dennis smiles at the ragtimers...but it withers away at once.

DENNIS (CONT'D)

Cassy?

Things look awkward for a few seconds.

CASSY

Dad!

EXT. COUGHLIN-MUJICAS' HOUSE - DAY

The sidewalk in front of the house is neatly shoveled.

INT. CASSY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Cassy and Tobey sit on the former's bed in this nicely-appointed room.

TOBEY

What was your dad doing there?

CASSY

It was an emergency. They called him. He used to work there once a week when we moved here from New Jersey, but he hasn't since 1978...I guess they couldn't reach the regular--

TOBEY

What happens now?

CASSY

I don't know. All I know is I'm grounded 'til...Bob Dylan dies!

TOBEY

Cassy--

CASSY

No, look, Tobey. On this one, Mom's as stubborn as the head of the KKK. I hate to fight her on it because she only remembers the lousy life she thinks she had.

The two musicians just sit in silence for a moment.

Then Tobey bangs her hands together in inspiration.

CASSY (CONT'D)

Wait a minute. You're not--

TOBEY

I promised I wouldn't stay too long.

Tobey bounds out of the room.

INT. COUGHLIN-MUJICAS' BASEMENT - FAMILY ROOM - DAY

Tobey saunters into this cozy, richly-decorated room...where Dennis and Wesley (both seated on a sofa) watch A BASKETBALL GAME on TV.

It's now halftime...and Tobey looks scared.

DENNIS

Tobey...funny you like basketball.

Tobey nods as she takes a seat on the sofa.

WESLEY

Something wrong?

TOBEY

I...well, I realize this is a sore spot with you and Cassy...and I don't want to even appear to look like I'm trying to do your job...

Wesley shakes her head "no."

TOBEY (CONT'D)

I've got a few albums by Wynton Marsalis...and every time I listen to them, I wonder how his parents feel about him choosing both jazz and classical music.

Wesley and Dennis look at each other, then at Tobey.

TOBEY (CONT'D)

At least Cassy's not a punk rocker. Not too many punk-rock trumpeters around.

DENNIS

Tobey, the second half of the basketball game starts in a few minutes. Would you please get to the point?

TOBEY

I'm trying.  
(shrugging)  
(MORE)

TOBEY (CONT'D)

Besides, with North Carolina ahead of Georgia Tech, sixty-five to twenty-six, it's basically over.

Tobey catches a deep breath.

TOBEY (CONT'D)

I guess what I'm trying to say is...well, what Cassy's going through and what you went through, Mrs. Coughlin-Mujica, when you were Cassy's age...they're two different things.

Wesley nods.

TOBEY (CONT'D)

And besides, Cassy's the type you'd never catch spending half her life in bars.

Tobey frowns.

TOBEY (CONT'D)

Sure, I'm not her mother, but I think she's too nice for that. Got a good head on her shoulders.

WESLEY

Tobey, she lied about the parties!

TOBEY

In a way. But I just wish you could've seen...well, she really enjoyed playing those parties.

Thumpers' leader shakes her head sideways.

TOBEY (CONT'D)

Another thing she told me is that being exposed to other forms of music than classical...in her case...helps her out. 'Cause there's good and bad in every kind of music.

Wesley and Dennis listen more intently than before.

TOBEY (CONT'D)

I think she'd like to tell you that...and if I were in your shoes...I'd never fit those shoes, of course...I'd at least listen.

Tobey rises from the couch and heads for the stairs.

TOBEY (CONT'D)  
 Thanks for letting me come, Dr.  
 Mujica and Mrs. Coughlin-  
 Mujica...you've got a good  
 daughter.

Dennis and Wesley watch Tobey walk up the stairs...then  
 Wesley follows her.

WESLEY  
 Wait!

INT. COUGHLIN-MUJICAS' BASEMENT - STAIRS

Wesley runs up the stairs to catch up to Tobey.

WESLEY  
 Cassandra and I will have that  
 talk!

Tobey turns around and flashes Wesley a huge smile.

INT. SCOTTS' GARAGE - DAY

Tobey (at that old upright), Lucianna (with the banjo), Jody  
 (on those drums), and Betsey (doing bass runs) rehearse.

TOBEY  
 Well, let's get going. I think we  
 can get used to not having a horn.

Tobey takes the lead as the band works on Jay Roberts' "The  
 Entertainer's Rag."

After sixteen bars...Cassy, horn cases and all, walks inside.

Betsey, Jody, and Lucianna stop playing...and Tobey stops a  
 bar later.

Cassy opens her trombone case while she stares at the four  
 stunned musicians.

JODY  
 We...thought you were through as a  
 Thumper.

CASSY  
 My mother and I had a talk.

Four shocked teens watch Cassy put her trombone together.

CASSY (CONT'D)

We agreed to some concessions, and I'll be able to continue as a Thumper...but I've still got to work on my classics once home...in fact, I'm to work an extra hour on the classics.

Jody's the only Thumper who breathes relief.

CASSY (CONT'D)

Tobey...

TOBEY

I know. Take it...from...the top.

All five Thumpers start over on "The Entertainer's Rag."

FREEZE FRAME when Cassy launches a trombone solo.

FADE OUT.

THE END