

"PLAYING FOR PRIDE"

Written by:
Jim Boston

1312 N. 48th Ave., #324
Omaha, NE 68132
402 556-3340
Huskercyclone@netzero.net
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FADE IN:

EXT. CARRIE'S AND PAUL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

This is a one-story, front-porch-adorned house on the southwest side of town.

SUPER: LINCOLN, NE, 1-10-1935

INT. CARRIE'S AND PAUL'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

In this cozy-and-efficient space, CARRIE HAINLEN KNIGHT (37, nurturing, sympathetic) and husband PAUL KNIGHT (37, philosophical) stand at the sink...where she washes the dishes and he dries them.

PAUL
Great dinner, Carrie.

CARRIE
Thank you, Paul.

The twosome kiss.

CARRIE (CONT'D)
But remember, honey: You helped.

Paul and Carrie lock lips again...and he fumbles the plate in his hands.

PAUL
I haven't peeled potatoes since I was in the Army in the Great War.

Paul secures the plate and places it in a shelf.

CARRIE
It's all right.

PAUL
It's been seventeen years...I'll get back in the swing of things.

They bring dishwashing to an end and head out of the kitchen.

CARRIE
Last night, we both heard your favorite show.

A big smile invades Paul's face.

PAUL
Yeah...that "Fred Allen Town Hall Tonight" sure grows on you.

CARRIE
 (with a nod)
 Now we get to listen to mine.

Carrie clasps Paul's hand as the couple stroll into:

INT. CARRIE'S AND PAUL'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Paul and Carrie stride into a heavily-furnished space that features a fireplace on one end...with a floor-model radio in one corner and a 1900-19 upright piano in an opposite corner.

The twosome fall into his-and-hers chairs near the radio.

Carrie bolts straight up to turn the radio ON. As the radio WARMS UP, Carrie and her husband look gleeful.

She checks her watch...and finds the time is 6:59 PM.

Paul watches his wife change the station.

When "The Hour of Charm" BLASTS OUT of the speaker, the gleeful look on Paul's face becomes a confused look.

PAUL
 Wait a minute, hon...don't you like
 Rudy Vallee's show anymore? You
 missed him last week.

Carrie's look of glee grows.

CARRIE
 (sits back down)
 Don't worry...I still buy
 Fleischmann's yeast.

Paul's is a slow nod.

CARRIE (CONT'D)
 I'd never cook without it.

He continues to nod while she savors the music of "The Hour of Charm's" stars: Phil Spitalny's All-Girl Orchestra.

Paul points at the radio...then at Carrie.

PAUL
 Well...I'll be a...

CARRIE
 Honey...this is my new favorite
 show.

MAIN TITLES APPEAR OVER ACTION.

Paul watches as Carrie wraps herself up in the music.

INT. CARRIE'S AND PAUL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The Two Knights sit up in bed in this cozy, modest space.

Paul looks dazed.

PAUL

Son of a buck...an all-girl
orchestra...is this real?

CARRIE

You bet your boots it is.

Husband turns to wife.

CARRIE (CONT'D)

It first came on last year...Monday
nights...and it was a fifteen-
minute show that was on for
thirteen weeks.

Paul's mouth flies open.

CARRIE (CONT'D)

I started listening to it a year
ago. They brought it back last
week.

PAUL

And they call it "The Hour of
Charm." A half-hour show.

A nodding Carrie beams.

PAUL (CONT'D)

With an all-girl orchestra.

CARRIE

Paul, don't you remember when we
went to the picture show seven
years ago...and before the feature,
they showed a short featuring an
all-female band, the Ingenues?

PAUL

They...were?

CARRIE

They were. And ever since we saw the Ingenues, I've wanted to conduct a band like that. A band that versatile.

Paul's confused look intensifies.

CARRIE (CONT'D)

Or an orchestra.

PAUL

Carrie...won't that interfere with your work as a history teacher?

Carrie shakes her head sideways.

CARRIE

We can rehearse on weekends.

PAUL

Okay.

CARRIE

I just think the time's right...what with Phil Spitalny and Antonia Brico having organized an all-female orchestra each. In New York City.

PAUL

That's New York City. We're in Lincoln. Lincoln, Nebraska.

CARRIE

And there's enough female instrumental talent here to pull it off...here in Lincoln.

Paul gazes at an alarm clock on a nearby table.

PAUL

We really oughta turn in.

He puts his head on his pillow.

CARRIE

I can feel it in my bones...I want to conduct an orchestra.

PAUL
 (bolting up)
 Carrie, dear...I still think you're
 pulling my leg.

CARRIE
 Not only that...a women's symphony
 orchestra. Just like Antonia Brico.

PAUL
 Now you're pulling both of my legs!

CARRIE
 Mind if I try for both of your
 arms, too?

Paul puts his head back on his pillow.

EXT. WILLARD SCHOOL - DAY

A smallish, three-story brick building in Southwest Lincoln.

INT. WILLARD SCHOOL MUSIC ROOM - DAY

In this rather cozy space, WILLARD WILLSCHULTZ (50s, oafish)
 struggles to guide THE WILLARD SCHOOL ORCHESTRA (thirteen
 boys and ten girls) through a light classical selection.

Carrie grimaces from the back of the room.

Toward the middle of the piece, violinist LILY MATTHEWS (12,
 resourceful) takes a solo...and outperforms the orchestra's
 remaining musicians.

Lily's solo brings a smile to Carrie's face.

When Lily's command of the number becomes clear, the other
 musicians stop playing.

WILLARD
 What're you children doing? Come
 on! Keep playing!

But Lily remains the only student to make music...until
 trumpeter THELMA JAMES (12, curious, Black) jumps back in
 toward the end of the piece.

Willard grits his teeth while musicians eyeball one another.

He shakes his head "yes" once the whole orchestra plays the
 selection's final bar.

WILLARD (CONT'D)
 Now...why'd the rest of you
 children quit?

THELMA
 Well, Mr. Willschultz...we were
 just admiring Lily's playing.

LILY
 Thank...thank you, Thelma.

Willard doesn't look convinced.

WILLARD
 The rest of you should've applied
 yourselves like Lily did. You had
 all week to prepare.

DOUGLAS PICKENS (10) looks up from the school drum set.

DOUGLAS
 Yeah...but, Mr. Willschultz, Lily
 plays miles and miles better than
 the rest of us.

Some students AD LIB their agreement with Douglas.

THELMA
 Come to think of it...why can't
 Lily direct this orchestra?

Willard bristles.

At a 1910-19 upright piano, PATRICE MCKINLEY (11) swivels
 around on its stool to face her fellow musicians.

PATRICE
 Or how about Mrs. Knight?

Carrie smiles...Willard grits his teeth.

WILLARD
 Patrice...Mrs. Knight is the
 history teacher here.

BOBBY ENSLEY (10) takes his alto sax apart.

BOBBY
 (to Willard)
 I remember when you were recoverin'
 from that toothache of yours. You
 took the week off.

WILLARD
What's your point, Bobby?

LILY
Well, Mr. Willschultz...no offense,
but we played better when she led
us than when you lead us.

Bobby shakes his head up and down.

THELMA
Much better!

Half the orchestra applauds while Willard stares in anger at
a flattered Carrie.

INT. WILLARD SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

Thelma, Lily, and THREE DOZEN OTHER STUDENTS watch Carrie
(seated at her desk) finish today's history class.

CARRIE
Very good, class!

Most of the students cheer.

CARRIE (CONT'D)
You brought up all the reasons the
Great War took place...starting
with Gavriolo Princip assassinating
Archduke Franz Ferdinand.

THELMA
On June twenty-eighth, 1914!

CARRIE
That's right!

The bell RINGS...but nobody moves.

CARRIE (CONT'D)
Great job! Class dismissed!

Students bolt out of their seats and head out of the room.

CARRIE (CONT'D)
(jumps up from desk)
Lily...I'd love to see you for a
few moments.

LILY
Uh...okay, Mrs. Knight.

Lily gravitates toward Carrie's desk.

LILY (CONT'D)
I've been studying...nearly-empty
stomach and all.

CARRIE
(sits back down at desk)
I know you have. You're one of our
best students.

A big smile crosses Lily's face.

CARRIE (CONT'D)
How'd you like to help me find
another twenty-two female musicians
so that Lincoln can have its own
women's symphony orchestra?

Lily's smile morphs into a blank look.

LILY
Will it be easier than when I found
a rat inside the family piano?

Carrie chuckles.

CARRIE
I don't know...but I know this:
Last year, a woman named Antonia
Brico started a women's symphony
orchestra in New York City.

Lily looks excited again.

CARRIE (CONT'D)
And she and her musicians are
showing that women can play the
same instruments men can.

LILY
Deal!

Teacher and student shake hands.

CARRIE
Thank you so much for offering to
help out.

LILY
You're welcome!

Lily heads for the door...but stops short to eye Carrie.

LILY (CONT'D)
Just curious...who's in the
orchestra already?

CARRIE
I'm looking right at her.

A shocked Lily points to herself.

CARRIE (CONT'D)
It's true.

LILY
Well...Beattie my Feathers...

CARRIE
Just like Evelyn on Phil Spitalny's
"Hour of Charm," you've got a magic
violin, too.

Carrie and Lily (both all smiles) wave at each other before
the latter exits.

EXT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

A CUSTOMER strolls into an almost-ramshackle downtown
building that features an awning marked "MEAT."

Fruits and vegetables adorn the storefront.

INT. GROCERY STORE SALESFLOOR - DAY

Paul and Carrie (she handles a shopping cart) stroll toward
the meat department in a store where SEVERAL OTHER SHOPPERS
put items into their own carts.

EILEEN FLANAGAN MANDERSON (76, spunky, unsinkable), cart in
hands, stands across the meat counter from butcher CORINNE
MCMICHAEL (33, friendly).

CORINNE
Happy Saturday, Mrs. Manderson.
What can we get you?

EILEEN
Well, Corinne, I wanna put my new
icebox to good use.

Corinne nods.

EILEEN (CONT'D)
You got a three-pound ham in there?

Carrie and Paul stop right behind Eileen...Corinne shakes her head "yes" again.

CARRIE
Mrs. Manderson!

While Corinne pulls out a three-pound ham, Eileen turns around to look at Carrie.

EILEEN
Carrie...Carrie Hainlen...Knight!

PAUL
(waves at Eileen)
Hi!

Paul, Eileen, and Carrie shake hands.

PAUL (CONT'D)
My wife still talks about
you...still raves about you.

CARRIE
Paul's right...you helped keep me
interested in music. You told me to
never give up.

Eileen beams.

CORINNE
Mrs. Manderson, here's your three-
pound ham.

Corinne shows the ham to Eileen.

EILEEN
Uh...can I get a four-pounder
instead?

CORINNE
I think we've got one...

Paul turns to Eileen as Corinne looks for a bigger ham.

PAUL
You were one of Carrie's music
professors at the University of
Nebraska. And you encouraged her to
become a conductor.

EILEEN
And those band concerts at Antelope
Park helped, too.

CARRIE
 (with a nod)
 Speaking of conducting...I've
 decided to form a women's symphony
 orchestra here in Lincoln.

Eileen looks gleeful...Corinne's ears perk up as her hands
 juggle a four-pound ham.

CARRIE (CONT'D)
 We've already landed a violinist.

Paul nods at Eileen.

PAUL
 After she and I saw that short with
 the Ingenues...and after "The Hour
 of Charm" started coming back
 on...Carrie felt the time was right
 to start a women's orchestra.

CARRIE
 And don't forget about Antonia
 Brico starting a women's symphony
 in New York City.

CORINNE
 (sets ham on counter)
 One four-pound ham coming up.

Eileen hands Corinne a dollar.

EILEEN
 Keep the change.

A surprised Corinne sticks the dollar into the cash register.

CARRIE
 Well...anyway, Mrs. Manderson, I've
 been thinking about how you've had
 your heart set on being a great
 concert pianist.

Eileen grabs the ham off the counter and sets the ham into
 her cart.

CARRIE (CONT'D)
 And with us, you'll finally get
 your chance.

EILEEN
 Well, count my chickens!

CARRIE

It wouldn't be the same without you
in it.

EILEEN

Count me in!

Carrie and Eileen shake hands once more.

CORINNE

Mrs. Knight...I'd like to be in
your orchestra, too.

Paul's, Eileen's, and Carrie's mouths fly open.

EXT. UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC - DAY

Snow complicates things around this three-story building on
this Saturday after Valentine's Day.

INT. UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA COM DINING ROOM - DAY

Not a sign of food in this large, multipurpose space.

University of Nebraska students ANITA PRENOSIL (21, glib,
clever) and KATHARINE HOLT (21, energetic) team up with
EDYTHE LUNA (25, calm) to arrange chairs and music stands
into an orchestra setup.

Carrie and Lily sit at a table at the front of the room; they
look up from handwritten notes to watch the threesome work.

Near the orchestra setup, CLAUDIA ROMMEL (23, bashful) plays
a selection from "The Nutcracker" on a 1900-09 upright piano.

An impressed Eileen listens...

EILEEN

Hang on, Claudia! Let's turn this
into a duet!

CLAUDIA

Uh...okay!

...and runs to an adjacent piano, an upright from the 1880s.
Eileen bats out a tinny-sounding countermelody.

That countermelody intrigues JANE O'SHAUGHNESSY (43,
inventive) and NANNETTE MCCALLISTER (48, motherly)...who walk
in with a cello case and a clarinet case, respectively.

NANNETTE

Jane...didn't we have Christmas a couple of months ago?

JANE

Yeah, Nannette...but I've always thought "Nutcracker" music was nice any time of the year.

Nannette and Jane find seats at Lily's and Carrie's table. The foursome trade AD LIBBED salutations.

Katharine, Edythe, and Anita finish their setup work. They catch their breaths and watch Claudia's and Eileen's duet.

KATHARINE

We've got our two pianists. Let's go upstairs and get that drum set.

ANITA

Katharine, you told me and Edythe you were gonna try out on piano.

KATHARINE

Anita...I can play drums.

EDYTHE

Me, too! And piano!

Anita, Edythe, and Katharine start for the door...only to back off to let JERRINE SCHENLEY BOEHM (24, perky; quite beautiful) and husband JOE BOEHM (25, jealous) through.

Joe and Jerrine push the latter's pedal harp into the room.

JOE

Listen, Jerrine: You shouldn't be doing this!

JERRINE

Joe, we've been through it and through it and through it! Music is where my heart is!

JOE

You oughta be out in Hollywood, makin' movies and bein' the next Jean Harlow!

Carrie and Lily jump up from their seats to guide Jerrine and Joe into sticking the harp in an empty space by the pianos.

JERRINE
Thanks, Mrs. Knight.

Jerrine and Carrie shake hands.

CARRIE
We're on a first-name basis
here...so you're free to call me
Carrie.

JERRINE
Okay, Carrie.

Lily extends her hand to Jerrine.

LILY
And I'm Lily...Matthews.

JERRINE
Lily, it's nice to meet you. I've
heard so much about you.

Jerrine shakes hands with Lily...Joe eyeballs Carrie.

JOE
So you're the one.

A smiling Carrie shakes her head "yes."

JOE (CONT'D)
What in Hades are you tryin' to
prove with this stunt, anyway?

CARRIE
Same thing Phil Spitalny's spent
the last three years out to prove.

And Joe cringes.

SAME SCENE - A BIT LATER

Claudia plays the 1880s piano and Eileen the 1900s one when
JEANNE RICHARDS (44, no-nonsense), OLIVE BAUSCH (38, quiet),
and CONSTANCE LOMB (35, Miss Congeniality) put Jeanne's drum
set together next to the conservatory's own drum kit.

CONSTANCE
(eyes Jeanne and Olive)
I like this orchestra already.

OLIVE
Just think...twice as many drum
sets as on "The Hour of Charm."

JEANNE

(with a strong nod)

This'll work much better. Me, I've always thought it silly to have somebody stand there holding a pair of cymbals and looking like a dope.

GRACE ANNE LOGAN (22, team-oriented), trombone case in her hands, sprints into the room...with boyfriend JIMMY KELLIN (21, insecure) in hot pursuit.

JIMMY

Don't do this, Grace Anne! Don't let this come between us!

Joe shakes his head up and down.

GRACE ANNE

Jimmy, don't start that again!

Grace Anne finds refuge in the orchestra seats...where Anita takes a trumpet out of its case and Edythe extracts an oboe from its case.

GRACE ANNE (CONT'D)

I spent four years going to classes in this building...and I'm not about to throw all of that away!

Those around Grace Anne applaud her...and a shrugging Jimmy takes a table seat next to Joe.

SAME SCENE - STILL LATER

Due to CURIOUS STUDENTS passing by, the place looks a bit more crowded than before...and, in shock, they observe how the hammers on both uprights now stand exposed.

ROCHELLE COLCLOUGH (25, abrasive), in her food server's uniform, sits in the orchestra setup and polishes her trumpet...while LULA MAE MCDERMOTT (34, gentle) and AIDA GIANCANELLI (37, a thinker) sit and watch alongside her.

Eileen and Claudia end their latest piano piece with a bang before they turn to the other hopefuls.

EILEEN

Okay...who'd like to play these keys next?

Nobody else answers...for a few seconds.

ROCHELLE
'Bout time!

Mouths fly open all over the room.

LULA MAE
Rochelle, that wasn't very nice.

AIDA
(wags finger at Rochelle)
I know you wouldn't want to be on
the receiving end of that.

Rochelle stands up and fires off a familiar-yet-powerful trumpet fanfare...that makes Carrie's eyes light up.

Corinne (flute case in hand) and tuxedo-clad, top-hat-wearing CHLOE BOYD (24, kooky; she totes a trombone case) walk inside...and head for Lily's and Carrie's table.

CARRIE
Corinne, we're glad you're here.

CORINNE
Chloe and I heard the music and
figured this was the place.

Carrie, Chloe, Corinne, and Lily shake hands...while Chloe's outfit draws stares from Jimmy and Joe.

Rochelle's fanfare continues strong...but now, Aida adds her bassoon work and Lula Mae follows on trombone.

KATHLEEN ANNE MANDEL "KITTY" WALDBAUM (34, witty) and husband SOLOMON WALDBAUM (36, a worrier) stroll inside...with Kitty toting a clarinet case.

SOLOMON
Kitty...you think they've got any
cake here?

KITTY
Come on, Solomon. Think.

SOLOMON
Well...this is a dining room.

Chloe and Corinne find seats in the orchestra area while it's handshakes for Carrie, Kitty, Solomon, and Lily.

SAME SCENE - EVEN LATER

Carrie, Eileen, and Lily now sit together...and breathe relief at the presence of HELEN KOUBEK (18, levelheaded) and her twin sister ESTHER KOUBEK (18, flighty), who deliver a stirring violin duet.

Esther and Helen end their piece with a flourish before they bow and bow to their applauding audience.

HELEN
Thank you!

ESTHER
So very, very much!

Claudia blows a kiss at the twins from the older piano.

SAME SCENE - LATER YET

JUNE KESSLER (32, hard-working, passionate) sits at the newer piano...where she holds her cello and its bow in one hand and dabs her tear-filled eyes with her other hand.

JUNE
(sobbing)
I've waited so...many years...so
many years...so many, many
years...so many, many, many
years...

Some musicians nod in understanding as they watch June struggle with her emotions. A few dab their own moist eyes.

EILEEN
Take your time, June. It's okay.

CARRIE
We're so very glad you're here.

JUNE
Thank you...for this opportunity...

June takes several breaths, dries her eyes, and...fires off an exuberant solo.

SAME SCENE - MINUTES LATER

A now-smiling June finishes her piece when IDA MAE MOSLEY ARD (30, confident, Black) lugs her double bass (in its case) into the room and takes a seat.

Ida Mae joins in the rousing applause...kudos June acknowledges with a bow.

Lily jumps up to approach Ida Mae, who sets her bass aside to stand up.

LILY
We're so very glad you've come.

Eileen and Carrie leave their seats to join the confab...and trigger handshakes all around for the foursome.

CARRIE
Your presence on the bass completes the orchestra.

IDA MAE
Well, thanks. All I can do is my level best--

Rochelle bolts up from her seat and glares at Ida Mae.

ROCHELLE
GET OUT!

EILEEN
(pointing to Rochelle)
You've never even heard her play!

Most of the hopefuls give Rochelle dirty looks.

CHLOE
Listen, Rochelle.

Rochelle waves Chloe off.

CHLOE (CONT'D)
I've known Ida Mae for years...and she's not only a great musician, she's a great barber.

CARRIE
(walks over to Rochelle)
Remember: Ida Mae's got as much right to audition for this orchestra as the rest of us do.

Carrie catches Rochelle's defiant look.

CARRIE (CONT'D)
Do you understand?

JEANNE
You better not spoil this for the rest of us, Rochelle!

Rochelle sits back down.

SAME SCENE - A BIT LATER

Ida Mae's bass solo brings down the dining room...and brings heartfelt applause from everybody but Rochelle (she contributes a single clap).

Carrie gathers the musicians around her.

CARRIE
Give yourselves a hand! You've all
passed the test!

All the females in the room applaud.

CARRIE (CONT'D)
All twenty-three of you are the
founding musicians of the Lincoln
Women's Symphony Orchestra!

EILEEN
And that's the truth!

Eileen's remark increases the jubilation.

CARRIE
I've got an idea about how we can
really break the ice...

Forty-six eyeballs gaze at Carrie.

CARRIE (CONT'D)
Let's see how we sound together!

JANE
Carrie, does it have to be a
classical piece?

Carrie stares in space before she turns to her colleagues.

CARRIE
Not really.

GRACE ANNE
In that case...how about
"Alexander's Ragtime Band?"

Musicians look at each other...then at Carrie.

IDA MAE
That'll work!

Now every performer except Rochelle cheers.

KITTY
 (to Rochelle)
 It'll still work.

SAME SCENE - MINUTES LATER

In the orchestra setup, trumpeters Anita and Rochelle, trombonists Grace Anne and Lula Mae, clarinetists Kitty and Nannette, oboist Edythe, and bassoonist Aida toot scales.

Olive jumps in with her tuba...Corinne and Constance follow on their flutes.

Violinists Esther, Helen, and Lily join cellist June and bassist Ida Mae in tuning up.

Harpist Jerrine and pianists Claudia and Eileen play a series of arpeggios.

Jeanne and Katharine handle drum fills...Jane tests out the conservatory's marimba.

Paul walks into the room and finds a seat alongside Jimmy, Joe, and Solomon when Chloe opens up her trombone case and...dredges up a musical saw and its bow!

CARRIE
 Paul, honey...you're just in time.

A beaming Paul nods...Solomon's mouth flies open...Joe and Jimmy look skeptical.

Carrie readies the orchestra.

CARRIE (CONT'D)
 (to the orchestra)
 One...two...one, two, three, four.

And, with introductory bars from Eileen and Claudia, the Lincoln Women's Symphony Orchestra takes off on a semiimprovised "Alexander's Ragtime Band."

Solomon crosses his fingers...Paul's eyes light up and his feet tap to the beat as he turns to Jimmy and Joe.

PAUL
 Just give it time.

Joe cringes...Jimmy shrugs.

INT. UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA COM BASEMENT HALLWAY - DAY

Orchestra members (instruments in tow), husbands, and boyfriend troop out of the dining room. Most in the throng whoop it up.

Claudia and Chloe stroll together.

CLAUDIA
Chloe, I...I like your outfit.

CHLOE
Thanks!

CLAUDIA
You've got a lot of courage.

CHLOE
Well, Claudia...chalk it all up to Marlene Dietrich wearing a tux in that picture she did five years ago..."Morocco."

Claudia shakes her head "yes."

CHLOE (CONT'D)
Really fell in love with the look...but unlike Marlene Dietrich, I don't go for smoking.

CLAUDIA
Same here.

Helen and Esther flank Constance.

HELEN
Constance, it's really fascinating that you were born in Switzerland.

ESTHER
(grins at Constance)
Can you still yodel?

CONSTANCE
Truth be told, Esther...I'm not really a yodeler.

Esther shrugs.

CONSTANCE (CONT'D)

My parents and I moved here to America just before the Great War broke out...so I ended up spending more time learning English than learning how to yodel.

Rochelle looks behind her...and finds Ida Mae, Kitty, and Solomon right behind her. She glares at Kitty and Ida Mae.

ROCHELLE

You two better watch your step!

IDA MAE

We'll be fine!

Solomon and Kitty nod at Ida Mae...while Rochelle almost slips on a small puddle of water.

INT. CARRIE'S AND PAUL'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Carrie doodles around on the piano...and sometimes writes notations on the sheet music she works with.

Paul leaves the kitchen and gravitates to the piano, where he takes a seat next to Carrie.

PAUL

Sounds pretty good, Carrie.

CARRIE

Thanks...wait 'til the Lincoln Women's Symphony plays this.

He gazes at the sheet music...whose title page reads: "SYMPHONY NO. 1 IN E MINOR." In smaller letters below: "FLORENCE PRICE."

PAUL

Honey...who's Florence Price?

CARRIE

She's an American composer.

Paul does a doubletake.

CARRIE (CONT'D)

Out of Chicago.

PAUL

No wonder I've never heard of her.

Carrie answers with a glissando.

EXT. GOOCH MILLING AND ELEVATOR COMPANY - DAY

This is a sprawling plant on Lincoln's southwest side.

INT. GOOCH PRODUCTION FLOOR - DAY

Jeanne and Olive operate a milling machine apiece...as do SEVERAL COWORKERS here on first shift.

The machines make so much noise that each flour miller must wear earplugs.

Olive watches her machine convert grain into powder...and gives a "thumbs up" once the results satisfy her.

Jeanne oh-so-carefully scoops up a handful of wheat-cum-powder...and shakes her head up and down.

Shift supervisor CHARLES "BUD" CAMPBELL (50s) watches Jeanne return the powder to the conveyer.

TOOOOOT! The whistle blows...machines POWER OFF.

Bud taps Jeanne on the shoulder once her machine stops.

BUD
Hey, Drummer Girl!

Jeanne rips her earplugs out and stuffs them into her jeans.

JEANNE
(eyeballing Bud)
Huh?

BUD
Lunch time!

As other machine operators make their way off the production floor, Olive strides toward Jeanne while yanking her own earplugs out.

OLIVE
Wait for me, Jeanne!

Bud watches the two LWSO members stroll away, arm in arm.

BUD
I suppose you two are too damn good
for us now!

JEANNE
Bud, it ain't like that!

Olive turns around to give Bud a smile.

INT. GOOCH CAFETERIA - DAY

Jeanne and Olive grab their lunchboxes from a refrigerator.

The two flour millers-classical musicians find two empty seats at a picnic table.

When the twosome sit down to chow down, the table's FOUR OTHER OCCUPANTS pack up their lunchboxes and scurry away.

INT. GOOCH BOOKKEEPING OFFICE - DAY

Constance and SEVEN OTHER BOOKKEEPERS (each at a desk) toil away in a large, somewhat stuffy space.

STANLEY PATTERSON (40s) runs the office from the only desk that doesn't have a bookkeeping machine.

Constance tiptoes over to Stanley's desk.

CONSTANCE

Mr. Patterson, do you have a minute or two?

STANLEY

What's the problem, Miss Lomb?

CONSTANCE

Follow me.

Stanley follows Constance to her desk...where she shows him figures from her bookkeeping machine in addition to a stack of handwritten notes.

CONSTANCE (CONT'D)

I've been going over the figures we've been handed...and things just don't add up.

He looks over her notes...then the data from the machine.

STANLEY

They add up to me.

CONSTANCE

Please...check again.

Constance receives the evil eye from Stanley.

STANLEY

They add up.

A few other bookkeepers wander from their own desks while Stanley wags a finger at Constance.

STANLEY (CONT'D)
 You know, if you hadn't decided to
 join that silly orchestra that
 schoolteacher started--

CONSTANCE
 (gritting her teeth)
 Silly my eye!

STANLEY
 That's what I said: Silly!

Stanley huffs his way back to his desk.

CONSTANCE
 Tell me, Stanley Patterson: Would
 you call the all-male Lincoln
 Symphony Orchestra "silly," too?

The other bookkeepers gasp...Stanley ignores Constance.

EXT. ARD'S BARBER SHOP - DAY

A smallish brick building not far from NU's City Campus.

INT. ARD'S BARBER SHOP - DAY

FOUR CUSTOMERS (three Black, one White) wait in leather chairs across from Ida Mae and her husband RAYMOND ARD (33, jovial, Black), who cut hair from behind barber's chairs.

Raymond works on FLOURNOY BROWN (30s, Black) while Ida Mae tidies up CARTER WILSON (40s, Black).

FLOURNOY
 Hey, Ray, you think they'll pass
 that Economic Security Bill?

RAYMOND
 I don't know.

Flournoy tries to turn around to look at Raymond.

RAYMOND (CONT'D)
 You wanna turn around, Flournoy? I
 ain't done with your hair.

CARTER
 (eyes on Flournoy)
 Cat got Raymond's tongue!

IDA MAE
 You wanna look straight ahead,
 Carter? I'm trying to finish
 cutting your hair!

Carter and Flournoy look straight ahead.

FLOURNOY
 But no, they talkin' about givin'
 old folks a government check ever'
 month and lettin' each state give
 out unemployment insurance.

WALT SHOECRAFT (60s; the only White customer in the place)
 points toward the barbers and their current clients.

WALT
 Hey, that wouldn't be too bad!

The other waiting customers stare (some openmouthed) at Walt.

WALT (CONT'D)
 Well...I'm in my sixties...and my
 arthritis is gettin' the best of
 me. Gettin' to where I can't work
 no more.

Ida Mae finishes with Carter's hair. She hands him a mirror.

IDA MAE
 How do you like it?

CARTER
 (with a grin)
 Just like uptown!

Carter gives the mirror back to a nodding Ida Mae.

FLOURNOY
 But I still can't get over that
 Earhart lady.

WALT
 She flied solo across the Pacific
 last month.

Raymond finishes cutting Flournoy's hair...Ida Mae gives her
 husband the mirror.

FLOURNOY
 Now she done flew across both the
 Pacific and Atlantic.

Raymond passes the mirror to Flournoy.

FLOURNOY (CONT'D)
 (accepts mirror)
 Ain't no man done that before.

RAYMOND
 How's that suit you, Flournoy?

FLOURNOY
 Hey, Ray, you're the Duke Ellington
 of barberin'.

RAYMOND
 Hey, thanks.

Ida Mae takes the robe off Carter; Raymond follows suit with Flournoy. Both customers stand up...and Raymond and Ida Mae set the robes aside.

FLOURNOY
 But all these ladies makin'
 headlines...Earhart...that Brico
 lady in New York...

Flournoy pays Raymond for the haircut; Carter hands his haircut money to Ida Mae.

IDA MAE
 Thanks, Carter.

Raymond and Flournoy shake hands.

WALT
 Speakin' of Brico...how 'bout that
 all-girl orchestra on the radio?

CARTER
 Hey, Walt...how about that
 schoolteacher here in Lincoln who
 got inspired by that guy with that
 all-girl orchestra on the radio?

A "huh?" look invades Walt's face.

FLOURNOY
 Carter...don't tell me she got her
 own orchestra.

Raymond and his wife nod.

IDA MAE
 I'm in it.

Six men's mouths fly open...Raymond's doesn't.

IDA MAE (CONT'D)
I play the double bass.

FLOURNOY
Well, I'll be a...

RAYMOND
Flournoy...she's telling the truth.

FLOURNOY
(points to Ida Mae)
What in the world are you doin'
playin' double bass in a
highfalutin' symphony orchestra?

RAYMOND
She's great! And you should hear
her on piano and guitar and--

Walt gravitates toward Raymond's barber's chair.

FLOURNOY
Yeah...but...

IDA MAE
Flournoy...I remember when you took
me to task for playing bass fiddle
in a jazz band.

FLOURNOY
No, I didn't!

RAYMOND
Yes, you did!

Now Walt stares hard at Ida Mae.

EXT. LINCOLN HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

This one's a sprawling three-story building from the 1910s.

INT. LINCOLN HIGH SCHOOL THEATER - DAY

LHS' PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA (Esther, Helen, and 48 other students on violins, cellos, violas, basses, and a harp) rehearses "1812 Overture" onstage under the direction of EDGAR STOCKWELL (50s, a bit of a voyeur).

Edgar looks worried as the piece comes down the home stretch.

EDGAR

Come on, violins! Sharpen up!

Helen, Esther, BEATRICE ANGELINI (18, a smart aleck), and the philharmonic's other violinists strive to play better.

CAROLINE PEDULLA (18, demure) and her fellow double bassists sail through the overture.

Now "1812 Overture" ends...and the musicians stare at Edgar, who stares in space for a while.

CAROLINE

Are you okay, Mr. Stockwell?

Edgar continues to stare in space.

BEATRICE

Bell's getting ready to ring.

Esther and her sister stare daggers at Beatrice.

EDGAR

Bassists, you're doing great.
Cellists, violists...you're doing
fine. Keep improving.

The violists, cellists, and bassists AD LIB their gratitude.

EDGAR (CONT'D)

You violinists need to step it
up...especially the twins.

Now Helen and her sister stare daggers at Edgar.

EDGAR (CONT'D)

Maybe if you two left that all-
women's orchestra that teacher at
Willard School started.

ESTHER

(stands straight up)
Wait a minute, Mr. Stock--

HELEN

Esther...sit down.

While Esther sits back down, harpist LILLIAN PICKENS (16; Douglas' sister) eyes Edgar.

LILLIAN

Mr. Stockwell...what about me?

Edgar gives Lillian a wide smile as the bell RINGS and other orchestra members pack up their instruments.

INT. LINCOLN HIGH SCHOOL STAIRWAY - DAY

Beatrice, Caroline, Esther, Helen, and Lillian (all five now with schoolbooks in hands) trudge up the stairs.

HELEN

Lillian...don't you think an explanation's in order?

ESTHER

(pointing at Lillian)
Give! You heard Helen!

Lillian takes a deep breath.

LILLIAN

Well...my brother Douglas is in the orchestra at Willard Elementary.

CAROLINE

Does he play the violin?

LILLIAN

No, he doesn't, Caroline. He plays the drums.

Caroline and Beatrice perk up as the teens' ascent continues.

LILLIAN (CONT'D)

But he plays alongside this violinist named Lily Matthews. And she's a world-class violinist. At twelve years of age!

Beatrice grits her teeth...Helen and an equally-satisfied Esther shake their heads "yes."

BEATRICE

I wish they didn't make me play the double-clutching violin.

Now Esther grits her teeth!

HELEN

I understand you, Beatrice...even if the sound of a violin is one of the world's most beautiful sounds.

ESTHER

Depending on who's playing.

LILLIAN
 Anyway, the history teacher at
 Willard Elementary started
 listening to "The Hour of Charm."

ESTHER
 Yep.

LILLIAN
 Next thing you know, she decided to
 form her own all-girl orchestra.

While OTHER STUDENTS head downstairs, the five musical
 teenagers reach:

INT. LINCOLN HIGH SCHOOL SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

Lillian, Helen, Esther, Caroline, and Beatrice try their best
 to dodge STILL OTHER STUDENTS.

CAROLINE
 And she recruited Lily to play.

LILLIAN
 Right!

HELEN
 Then she and Mrs.
 Knight...Carrie...got together with
 one of Carrie's old University of
 Nebraska professors to find other
 female musicians.

ESTHER
 And that's why Helen and I are in
 the Lincoln Women's Symphony.

Beatrice's mouth flies open.

LILLIAN
 To sum it all up...Douglas told me
 about Lily and her being in the
 LWSO...and I told Mr. Stockwell.

Esther makes a move to choke Lillian...but Helen gestures
 Esther out of the action.

BEATRICE
 (to Lillian)
 Why couldn't this Lily Matthews be
 a United States-class violinist?

Four looks of confusion greet Beatrice.

BEATRICE (CONT'D)
Or a Nebraska-class violinist?

Caroline shrugs as the teenagers' stroll continues.

EXT. JERRINE'S AND JOE'S HOUSE - DAY

The Boehms live in a two-story house closer to downtown than the Knights' abode.

INT. JERRINE'S AND JOE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Jerrine uses her violin bow as a baton while she guides Patrice (who plays an 1890s upright piano) through a semiclassical number.

No quit in Patrice this time!

Jerrine grabs her violin to play alongside her student during the number's closing twenty-four (or so) bars.

Patrice and Jerrine break into smiles at the piece's end...so does the former's mom, GWENDOLYN MCKINLEY (40s), who sits on a sofa.

JERRINE
Very good, Patrice!

GWENDOLYN
(applauding)
Now that's my daughter!

Jerrine puts her violin and her bow away before she joins Gwendolyn in the applause.

PATRICE
(takes a bow)
Thank you, Mama! Thank you, Mrs. Boehm!

JERRINE
That's our lesson for today.

Teacher and student shake hands.

JERRINE (CONT'D)
Keep working on this piece and your exercises...and that'll make Mr. Willschultz know you've got no quit in you.

Patrice grabs her music off the piano, then sets the music on a coffee table before she dons her winter coat.

GWENDOLYN
Here, Patrice. Let me help you.

PATRICE
Okay, Mama.

Gwendolyn helps adjust Patrice's coat. When the former sticks her own coat on, Joe (in his own coat) lopes into the room.

Man, he looks stunned!

JERRINE
Joe...you're home early.

PATRICE
Mrs. Boehm...if Mrs. Knight can't do it...I wish you were our orchestra conductor instead of that Mr. Willschultz.

Jerrine gives Patrice a stunned look...Gwendolyn tries to hide a chuckle...Joe shakes his head "no" at Jerrine.

PATRICE (CONT'D)
You're better at leadin' an orchestra than him...and you're pretty, too.

JERRINE
Uh...thank you.

Now Joe shakes his head up and down.

GWENDOLYN
You ready to go, my child?

With a nod, Patrice grabs her music off the coffee table...and she and her mother head for the front door.

JERRINE
(waving at the McKinleys)
See you next time!

Gwendolyn and her daughter wave back and head out...Joe strides toward Jerrine.

JOE
Did you hear that?

JERRINE
How'd the crop insurance meeting go, Joe?

JOE

Never mind that! Don'tcha know that
little girl you were teachin' said
you were pretty?

Jerrine gestures Joe into a seat on the sofa.

INT. UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA COM DINING ROOM - DAY

From a podium, Carrie looks out at her twenty-three orchestra members...all of whom sit at, stand behind, or hold their musical instruments.

Solomon and Paul sit in anticipation at that nearby table.

CARRIE

Now...before we get started this
afternoon...you get to choose what
our opening number should be.

Esther and Rochelle shoot Carrie incredulous looks when Raymond and a reluctant Jimmy burst through the door.

RAYMOND

Look, Jimmy: If I can support my
wife playing in this orchestra, you
can support your girlfriend playing
in this orchestra, too.

Jimmy shuts the door behind him. He and Raymond take seats next to Paul and Solomon.

Grace Anne breathes a sigh of relief.

NANNETTE

Carrie...shouldn't that be your
decision? You're the conductor.

Nannette gains AD LIBBED reactions from some players.

EILEEN

Aw, come on, ladies...we're all in
this together.

LILY

And it's a good exercise for us.

HELEN

In that case, Lily...Esther and I
are curious about how you'd play
the "1812 Overture."

A surprised Lily points to herself.

CARRIE

In that case, everybody...look in your folders for "1812 Overture."

Musicians shuffle their music sheets around (a few awkwardly) until "1812 Overture" becomes the first selection.

CARRIE (CONT'D)

We'll start out with that when we play our debut concert.

Helen, Esther, and Lily tune their violins...Ida Mae and June follow suit on double bass and cello, respectively.

Claudia (at the 1900s upright) and Eileen (at the 1880s upright) wallop out keyboard runs...Jerrine plucks out arpeggios on her harp.

Rochelle and Anita (both on trumpet), Grace Anne and Lula Mae (both on trombone), Nannette and Kitty (both on clarinet), Constance and Corinne (both on flute), and Olive, Aida, and Edythe (on tuba, bassoon, and oboe, respectively) do scales.

Katharine and Jeanne pound out drum fills...Jane bangs away on tympani...Chloe plays scales on the marimba.

Carrie looks satisfied...she readies the orchestra.

CARRIE (CONT'D)

One...two...one, two, three, four.

Lily, June, Ida Mae, Helen, and Esther open this piece. After four bars in this slow beginning, the twins try to follow Lily...note for note.

SOLOMON

Paul...you think they remembered the cannons?

PAUL

Well...I think Carrie wants to make sure the orchestra has this down.

Raymond shakes his head "yes."

JIMMY

I know the Armory's got cannons.

Grace Anne grits her teeth at Jimmy.

SAME SCENE - AN HOUR LATER

The Lincoln Women's Symphony Orchestra works on the first movement of "Symphony No. 1 in E Minor."

Raymond, Jimmy, Paul, and Solomon listen as Constance and Corinne take the musical lead with their "calls," which spawn "responses" from Ida Mae, June, a Jerrine who joins in on cello, and the three violinists.

In this one, Chloe plays glockenspiel.

Rochelle whispers to Anita.

ROCHELLE
Why do I get the feeling we're
playing "Ol' Man River?"

Anita gestures her fellow trumpeter into silence.

SAME SCENE - A BIT LATER

In the second movement of Florence Price's masterpiece, Aida, Anita, Edythe, Grace Anne, Kitty, Lula Mae, Nannette, Olive, and Rochelle play the "calls."

Chloe (now on a conga drum) joins Jane, Jeanne, and Katharine in providing a light beat underneath all those horns and all those woodwinds.

Eileen flashes Claudia a sly look.

EILEEN
Whaddya say we help the
percussionists out?

CLAUDIA
Huh?

Eileen raps on her piano's fallboard...Claudia shrugs before she does the same on her own piano.

Paul and Raymond nod in approval while Jimmy and Solomon look some kind of lost.

RAYMOND
(to Solomon and Jimmy)
It's just like Ida Mae says: A
piano's a percussion instrument.

An even-more-confused Jimmy stares at Raymond.

SAME SCENE - STILL LATER

Only one drum set needed in this version of "Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2." And Jeanne pounds that set of skins.

Claudia and Jerrine (playing the 1880s upright), Eileen and Katharine (at the 1900s upright), and Carrie and Chloe (both bang the keys of a 1910s upright piano) lead the orchestra in bringing this piece down the home stretch.

The hammers stand exposed on all three old pianos.

The six pianists wallop the last three notes...and set off applause from other LWSO members and the four-man audience.

CARRIE

(rising up)

Great first rehearsal, everybody!

Jubilant musicians eyeball each other.

KITTY

Nothing's gonna stop us now...not even the first thing smoking!

Nannette pats Kitty on the back.

AIDA

I don't want to spoil the mood...but what are we gonna do for a cannon on "1812 Overture?"

JANE

Aida, we might not need one!

EDYTHER

(to Jane)

Especially with you and Jeanne and Katharine back there!

Edythe's line increases the cheering and creates laughter.

The door opens...Joe busts in...mouths drop all over the dining room.

JOE

Jerrine, honey, pack your bags!

Jerrine shakes her head back and forth.

JOE (CONT'D)

You and me are goin' to Hollywood!

Rochelle stares daggers at Kitty.

ESTHER
 (eyeballing Helen)
 So much for not letting the first
 thing smoking stop us.

Jerrine jumps up from the 1880s piano. Joe walks toward her.

JOE
 Honey, I pulled some strings...and
 I got you a screen test!

JERRINE
 You shouldn't have!

Chloe, Claudia, Eileen, and Katharine bolt up from their
 pianos to surround Joe, Jerrine, and a stunned Carrie.

JOE
 But, Jerrine...I did this for you!

JEANNE
 NO, YOU DIDN'T!

JERRINE
 You! Shouldn't! Have!

Lily strides over to the group around the pianos. She grits
 her teeth while she eyeballs Joe.

LILY
 That wasn't the gift she was
 looking for.

Joe's shrug is a wild one.

EXT. SANTA FE STATION, LOS ANGELES, CA - DAY

Jerrine and Joe drag their luggage as they saunter away from
 a Moorish-styled depot where a few sections show significant
 earthquake damage.

JERRINE
 I've got the feeling this trip was
 hastily organized.

JOE
 Nosirree! I put a lotta thought
 into this trip.

Jerrine cringes.

JERRINE

Now you know I'm perfectly fine
making music and helping children
make music.

JOE

Jerrine, honey...you ain't gonna be
famous doin' that.

JERRINE

Try me.

The twosome stop their stroll to scan...

EXT. SANTA FE AVENUE, LOS ANGELES, CA - DAY

...for cabs (despite FOOT TRAFFIC along the sidewalk).

JOE

Listen...you're the prettiest girl
in the whole wide world. Bar none.

She opens her mouth to speak...but he gestures her out of it.

JOE (CONT'D)

You oughta be in pictures!

JERRINE

No! You listen! I can't act my way
out of a Kleenex tissue!

EXT. SOUTH FOLSOM STREET, LINCOLN, NE - DAY

A snowy last February Monday...and SOME BUNDLED-UP STUDENTS
(books in hands) struggle their way to Willard School.

INT. WILLARD SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

It's before home room...and Bobby and Douglas slink into the
empty seats that flank Lily's.

BOBBY

(to Lily)

Is it true...Mrs. Knight's
orchestra losin' their harp player?

LILY

I don't know. She and her husband
went on a trip to Hollywood.

Douglas eyeballs Bobby, then turns to Lily.

DOUGLAS
How long's she gonna be gone?

LILY
I don't know, Douglas.

BOBBY
Lily...is she gonna be a star?

Carrie strolls into the classroom. While she heads for her desk, Thelma and the rest of Lily's classmates filter in.

LILY
Well, Bobby, she's already a star...in our orchestra. The Lincoln Women's Symphony.

Bobby shrugs...only to jump out of his seat to give the seat to its rightful occupant.

BOBBY
(on the way out)
I meant a Katharine Hepburn or Fay Wray kinda star.

Douglas looks up, sees the rightful occupant of Douglas' seat, and flees the room behind Bobby.

Both rightful occupants sit down when Lily approaches a now-seated Carrie...and Willard runs into the room.

LILY
Hi, Mrs. Knight.

CARRIE
Hi, Lily.

Willard stops at Carrie's desk.

LILY
Have we got a few minutes to talk about Jerrine?

WILLARD
My dear Carrie...do you have an extra piece of chalk?

Carrie and Lily give Willard puzzled looks.

WILLARD (CONT'D)
My last piece broke.

CARRIE

Willard, there's an extra piece on
the blackboard. Help yourself.

Willard reaches the blackboard and grabs that extra piece of
chalk. His eyes light up.

WILLARD

Jerrine...Jerrine...one of my
orchestra members is taking piano
lessons from a Jerrine.

CARRIE

The same Jerrine whose husband took
her on a trip to Hollywood.

Lily and Willard nod.

LILY

And she might end up being the next
Jean Harlow...or the next Fay Wray.

WILLARD

(huge smile)

It just goes to show you...she's
better off in Hollywood.

CARRIE

That's not the way she sees it.

WILLARD

Face it: She's too pretty to play
in an orchestra!

A shrugging Lily returns to her seat when the bell RINGS.

Chalk in hand, Willard hurries out of the room.

WILLARD (CONT'D)

Thanks for the chalk!

Some students laugh with Willard gone...Thelma raises her
hand and nods.

CARRIE

Uh...yes, Thelma?

THELMA

Mrs. Knight, you need to be our
school's orchestra conductor.

Classmates applaud while Carrie looks flattered.

MONTAGE SEQUENCE

Joe and Jerrine see the sights in Los Angeles:

EXT. "HOLLYWOOD" SIGN - DAY

Joe uses a Brownie camera to catch photos of his wife...who strikes sexy poses.

Jerrine takes pictures of her husband with the same camera...despite his attempts to look virile.

EXT. DEPARTMENT STORE - DAY

The couple come out loaded down with purchases.

INT. LUNCH COUNTER AT WOOLWORTH'S ON SOUTH BROADWAY - DAY

The duo from Lincoln feast away.

EXT. GRAUMAN'S CHINESE THEATER - DAY

Jerrine sticks her hands into the handprints of a big-name movie star...then cajoles a reluctant Joe into doing so.

INT. GRAUMAN'S CHINESE THEATER - DAY

The twosome watch a film...and kiss.

EXT. ROSSLYN HOTEL - NIGHT

The harpist and her insurance-agent hubby stroll hand in hand toward a pair of eleven-story skyscrapers.

INT. ROSSLYN HOTEL DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Joe and Jerrine click glasses...then Jerrine sings and pounds out a romantic tune on the pre-1929 upright piano Joe sits on top of.

END MONTAGE

EXT. J STREET, LINCOLN, NE - DAY

With Lincoln High School well in the background, Lillian (books in hands) negotiates her way on the snowy sidewalk.

Helen and Esther (both lug books, too) try to jog toward her. All three students wear heavy winter coats.

HELEN

Lillian! You got a minute?

Lillian stops; Esther and Helen catch up to her.

LILLIAN
What's on your mind, Helen?

The twins and Lillian stroll on.

HELEN
Well, you see...there's a possibility our harpist in the Lincoln Women's Symphony Orchestra will move to Hollywood.

LILLIAN
They still got a women's symphony orchestra in Los Angeles?

ESTHER
Our harpist could become a movie star...another Claudette Colbert.

Lillian's mouth flies open in delight.

HELEN
But she doesn't want to be a movie star. Her husband wants her to be a movie star.

LILLIAN
Okay...where do I come in?

Helen and her sister eyeball one another, then Lillian.

HELEN
Lillian...would you like to try out for the...

Esther and her sister catch Lillian's scowl.

ESTHER
Nah...you wouldn't like to try out for the Lincoln Women's Symphony.

EXT. EDUCATIONAL FILMS, LOS ANGELES, CA - DAY

Jerrine and Joe walk toward the building.

JOE
Remember, Jerrine, honey: Give it the ol' college try.

She draws a blank look.

JOE (CONT'D)
How about the ol' high school try?

JERRINE
Joe, don't you remember when I
tried out for the school play at
Lincoln High my sophomore year?

JOE
Never mind that! You looked pretty!

JERRINE
I stank out the theater!

JOE
Stop talkin' like that.

JERRINE
I'm so glad I found a spot in the
orchestra pit.

He chuckles.

INT. EDUCATIONAL FILMS STUDIO #1 - DAY

Joe and Jerrine shake hands with studio bigwigs LOUIS
KORNFELD (50s), LORNA DUNAGIN (30s), and AMOS NEWBERRY (40s).

JOE
So, Mr. Kornfeld...this is your
outfit...I mean studio.

Lorna, Jerrine, and Amos cringe.

LOUIS
That's correct.
(to Jerrine)
Miss Dunagin is one of our casting
directors, and Mr. Newberry will
direct your screen test.

JERRINE
Uh...huh.

AMOS
Jerrine...we went wild over the
photograph your husband sent us.

Jerrine gives Joe a "how'd I get into this?" look.

AMOS (CONT'D)
It'll be a tremendous pleasure to
work with you.

LORNA
(pointing to Jerrine)
What kind of acting experience do
you have?

JERRINE
I tried out for the school play my
sophomore year at Lincoln High
School in Lincoln, Nebraska.

Amos and Louis look hopeful.

JERRINE (CONT'D)
But...I stank out the place.

AMOS
It's no matter!

JOE
(to Jerrine)
Now you listen to Mr. Newberry.

Jerrine grimaces at her husband.

LORNA
First thing we've gotta do,
Miss...Mrs. Boehm...we've gotta
change your name.

JERRINE
What's wrong with Jerrine Schenley?

Joe points to his wife.

JOE
(smiles at Louis)
That's Hollywood! That's the way
things operate here! Right?

LOUIS
Look at it this way...

Louis reaches for Jerrine...but gains Joe's withering look.

LOUIS (CONT'D)
Jerrine...would you go to a picture
that starred Archibald Leach?

JERRINE
Archibald who?

LORNA
 Just as they renamed Archibald
 Leach Cary Grant...we're changing
 your name from Jerrine Schenley
 Boehm to...Mildred Madison.

Jerrine and Joe stare Lorna down.

JERRINE
 (pointing to herself)
 Does this look like a Mildred?

A grinning Amos nods.

SAME SCENE - A BIT LATER

All's quiet on the set...Louis, Lorna, and Joe watch Amos
 helm a scene between Jerrine and RONALD "BUSTER" MCLAUGHLIN
 (late 20s; good-looking).

The set looks like a downtown Tinseltown hotel room.

LORNA
 Hate to tell you this, Mr.
 Boehm...but this is a closed set.

Joe's mouth flies open.

LORNA (CONT'D)
 In the meantime...help yourself to
 our commissary.

Joe shrugs on his way off the set.

AMOS
 Buster...are you and Mildred ready?

BUSTER
 Ready for anything, Mr. Newberry!

Buster and a slowly-nodding Jerrine gravitate toward a full-
 size bed.

AMOS
 Lights...camera...action!

Buster and Jerrine sit on the bed.

BUSTER
 (hugging Jerrine)
 Listen, honey...everything's gonna
 be all right. Just as long as
 you're with me.

JERRINE

Oh, thank you, dear.

Jerrine completes the embrace...while A GIANT APE peeks through the open window.

The ape GROWLS as it reaches a hand through the window.

Buster breaks the hug, grabs a chair, and swats at the ape...only to fall to the floor due to the ape's blow.

The chair breaks into pieces...and Jerrine takes a couple of chair pieces and fights the ape.

Buster looks surprised...Amos looks horrified...Lorna grits her teeth...Louis throws his hands up.

AMOS

CUT!

Jerrine and Buster eyeball Amos.

BUSTER

Mildred, you're supposed to be a damsel in distress.

AMOS

Buster, I'm the director. You're the leading man.

And Jerrine shakes her head "no."

EXT. UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC - DAY

The front door opens...and Anita and Grace Anne (horn cases in tow) stroll out of the building in their winter coats.

ANITA

So, Grace Anne...how do you like being a teaching assistant?

GRACE ANNE

Suits me just fine, Anita.

An equally-bundled-up Katharine (with her drumsticks) follows the twosome...

GRACE ANNE (CONT'D)

But here's the thing about it: I'm now teaching some of the same students I just got through sitting alongside in class.

...and runs up to a place alongside them.

KATHARINE

What're we gonna do about the first possible defection from the Lincoln Women's Symphony Orchestra?

Anita smirks.

GRACE ANNE

Katharine, nobody's defecting.

KATHARINE

Well, who's gonna play the harp when Jerrine's out in Hollywood trying to be the next Bette Davis?

The three LWSO musicians stroll on...STUDENTS try to dodge the trio.

ANITA

She doesn't wanna be the next Bette Davis. She wants to be the one and only Jerrine Boehm.

KATHARINE

You know how persuasive her husband Joe is.

GRACE ANNE

How persuasive can he be when he couldn't talk Jerrine out of joining our orchestra in the very first place?

Katharine's nod is slow.

KATHARINE

But they're out in Los Angeles right now...enjoying that great weather out there.

ANITA

Katharine...listen: Why don't you take up the harp?

Anita catches Katharine's stunned expression.

ANITA (CONT'D)

You already play guitar and ukelele and piano...beautifully.

KATHARINE
Are you kidding?

GRACE ANNE
(to Katharine)
Anita's right.

KATHARINE
Why don't you two take up the harp?

GRACE ANNE
Well...I could...but I'm having too
much fun playing trombone alongside
Lula Mae.

ANITA
You realize how heavy a harp
is...compared to a trumpet?

Grace Anne and Katharine hand Anita dirty looks.

EXT. CECIL HOTEL, LOS ANGELES, CA - NIGHT

This is a downtown landmark...fifteen stories high.

INT. JERRINE'S AND JOE'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

The Two Boehms (both in their pajamas) stay in a modest room.

Jerrine sits up in a full-size bed...Joe opens the window.

He sticks a foot out the window when she sprints to his side.

JERRINE
C'mon, Joe...don't do it.

JOE
You blew the screen test! Twice!

JERRINE
My heart just wasn't in it!

She grabs him by his waist.

JERRINE (CONT'D)
Not everybody can play a musical
instrument...and not everybody can
be an actor or actress.

JOE
Jerrine...think of all the ladies
that'd kill each other for a place
in Hollywood!

JERRINE

I already thought of them.

Jerrine tries to push Joe away from the window...and finds it tough sledding.

JERRINE (CONT'D)

Please, Joe...get your foot out of the window.

JOE

Lemme go!

She lets him go...only to see him stick his foot further out the window.

JERRINE

Just think about all the clients you're gonna leave behind if you jump out that window.

Joe stares out the window for a few seconds.

JOE

Oh...that's...right...

Jerrine leads her husband to the bed. Both sit up in the bed.

JERRINE

Remember when we first met?

JOE

Are you kiddin' me?

JERRINE

We made a promise that we were gonna be honest with each other and about each other.

Joe's is a slow, slow nod.

JERRINE (CONT'D)

So...just like insurance is your calling, music is my calling.

JOE

Okay...you got me.

Joe and his wife hold hands.

JERRINE

I still love you...always will.

JOE
I still love you, too...always.

Jerrine opens her pillow case and pulls out...a harmonica!

JERRINE
My consolation prize for
unsuccessfully trying out for a
prison movie.

An openmouthed Joe watches Jerrine toot out a bluesy
number...that earns her A THUMP on the wall.

INT. UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA COM DINING ROOM - DAY

ALBERT LITTLE (40s) sits at the table, where he writes into a
notepad as he watches the LWSO's remaining musicians
accompany a rejuvenated Jerrine in "Harp Concerto in B Flat,"
by George Frideric Handel.

Jimmy, Joe, Paul, Raymond, and Solomon sit at the same table.
All six men applaud when the piece ends.

CARRIE
(nods at her musicians)
That's a good first run-through.

Orchestra members eyeball each other in jubilation.

CARRIE (CONT'D)
Woodwinds...tighten it up a little
bit and we'll be fine.

CORINNE
You bet.

Edythe, Constance, and Aida nod in agreement.

CARRIE
Everybody...let's take a break and
welcome Albert Little, from the
"Nebraska State Journal."

Most symphony members clap...the others sit in shock.

ALBERT
Nice to meet you ladies...you sound
so great together.

CONSTANCE
It's very kind of you to say that,
Mr. Little.

LULA MAE
And we thank you for being here.

Albert beams.

ALBERT
What I'd like to do is write an
article about the Lincoln Women's
Symphony Orchestra.

Mouths fly open all over the dining room.

IDA MAE
Wow...you're gonna write about us.

ALBERT
That's right! One of our readers
wrote to us about the history
teacher at Willard School who drew
inspiration from Phil Spitalny's
radio show...

LILY
And from Antonia Brico starting a
women's symphony orchestra in New
York City.

JUNE
Absolutely right, Lily!

Eileen jumps up from her seat at the 1880s upright piano.

EILEEN
That's it, everybody! Let's spill
all the beans and get Albert enough
information so he can write that
article about us!

Jubilation takes over among LWSO members.

SAME SCENE - A BIT LATER

Carrie places a chair next to the table while Albert turns to
a clean sheet in his notepad.

CARRIE
(sits down)
Well, I got to thinking about how
Phil traveled the nation for six
months and spent twenty thousand
dollars and auditioned fifteen
hundred women musicians.

PAUL
 (nodding to Albert)
 Before he found twenty-two of 'em
 to populate the orchestra.

Albert writes on that sheet...Eileen saunters to the table.

CARRIE
 And I got to thinking about how I
 loved going to the park when I was
 little...and listening to the
 Lincoln Municipal Band. And I
 decided I wanted to be a conductor.

Jimmy gives his seat to Eileen. He veers off in search of
 another chair.

Some other musicians gather around the table.

EILEEN
 (sitting down)
 I was one of Carrie's professors
 here at NU...and she'd tell me
 about how the other professors
 tried to steer her away from
 conducting.

Carrie's nod is slow.

CARRIE
 They kept telling me: "Conducting
 an orchestra isn't ladylike."

Albert nods...Jimmy finds his new chair and tries to park it
 as close to the table as possible.

CARRIE (CONT'D)
 I'd rather eat poison mushrooms and
 drink hemlock than have people tell
 me conducting isn't for women.

SOLOMON
 (to those around him)
 At the same time?

SAME SCENE - MINUTES LATER

Carrie and Albert now sit next to the podium...and the twenty-
 three LWSO musicians sit or stand in the orchestra setup.

GRACE ANNE

Well, as you can see, Mr. Little,
we come from just about all walks
of life.

Albert scribbles away.

GRACE ANNE (CONT'D)

Ida Mae's a barber, Kitty helps run
a clothing store, Edythe's a cook,
Rochelle's a waitress--

ROCHELLE

But me and Edythe don't work in the
same restaurant.

Some musicians grimace at Rochelle.

OLIVE

Jeanne, Constance, and I work at
the Gooch Milling plant on South
Street...Anita and Katharine are
students here at NU...Helen and
Esther go to Lincoln High...

AIDA

Carrie, of course, teaches at
Willard School, and Lily goes
there. Grace Anne's a teaching
assistant here...Jerrine and June
teach music out of their own homes.

Joe and a smiling Jerrine shake their heads "yes."

CLAUDIA

Uh...I work in a department
store...and Corinne's a butcher in
a grocery store...Jane's a
secretary...and Chloe works in a
filling station.

Chloe fields shocked looks from some orchestra mates.

CHLOE

Well...we are a motley crew...our
filling station's having a sale on
lube jobs.

EILEEN

And Lula Mae's a church organist.

NANNETTE

When she isn't a receptionist.

Lula Mae's eyes light up.

LULA MAE
Speaking of church...I've been
talking with the staff at M Street
Methodist Episcopal Church...

ALBERT
Don't you play there, Lula Mae?

LULA MAE
Yes, I do...and they're interested
in hosting our debut concert.

A buzz results from Lula Mae's remark.

KATHARINE
When? What day?

LULA MAE
They've offered us Sunday, March
thirty-first. Three o'clock PM.

All eyes turn to Carrie. She scans the room...and catches expectant looks from all.

CARRIE
Tell 'em...we accept the offer!

The dining room erupts in pandemonium!

KITTY
Solomon, don't worry. There'll be a
reception...and they'll have cake!

Solomon raises his arms and whoops it up.

EXT. M STREET METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH - DAY

A proud-looking ragtime-era structure downtown.

INT. M STREET METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH SANCTUARY - DAY

An orchestra setup replaces the altar up front. In it, Anita, Grace Anne, Lula Mae, Olive, and Rochelle blow out scales on their brass instruments.

Stanley, wife SARA PATTERSON (40s), and church pastor THEODORE KLAWITTER (50s) sit in the front pew...and watch the next nine pews fill with OTHER PEOPLE.

Everybody's attire: Sunday best, of course.

Solomon, Paul, Joe, Albert, and a nervous Jimmy sit in the next pew. When Raymond joins the five, Jimmy's nerves calm.

Sara frowns, though.

LEO and MABEL MATTHEWS (both 40s; Lily's parents...and he's a mountain of a man) sit one pew behind...alongside the twins' mom, MURIEL KOUBEK (50s).

MURIEL

Listen to that. Doesn't that make you feel proud?

MABEL

Muriel, wait'll they actually play.

LEO

One thing's for sure: They don't have that locked-out, rejected feeling anymore.

In the setup, Aida, Constance, Corinne, Edythe, Kitty, and Nannette toot out warmup exercises on their woodwinds...as Gwendolyn and Patrice take seats in a middle pew.

Esther, Helen, Ida Mae, June, and Lily zip through exercises on their stringed instruments...when Edgar and Willard hurry to a back pew.

Eileen plays arpeggios on the sanctuary's grand piano...Claudia does scales on a 1900-19 upright piano...Jerrine warms up on her harp.

Bobby, Douglas, Lillian, Thelma, and THEIR MOMS AND DADS file in. They settle into the back pews...and look impressed.

Chloe plays scales on a marimba while Jane, Jeanne, and Katharine pound out percussion exercises.

Carter, Flournoy, and Walt stroll inside...

FLOURNOY

You know, Walt, you clean up pretty darn well.

WALT

Thank you kindly, Flournoy.

CARTER

It's true!

...and find seats in a back pew when Carrie enters the sanctuary.

She reaches the podium when Theodore, Stanley, and Sara stride to the podium.

THEODORE
Hold it, Mrs. Knight!

Carrie's mouth flies open.

SARA
(gestures to Lula Mae)
Miss McDermott, come here.

A shocked Lula Mae winces from her spot in the trombone section to join the confab at the podium.

Stanley wags a finger at Lula Mae and Carrie.

STANLEY
Why didn't you two tell us your
bass player is colored?

LULA MAE
Why does Ida Mae's skin color
bother you?

SARA
Or that one of your clarinet
players is a Jew?

A buzz grows in the orchestra setup...an even bigger tumult builds in the pews.

LULA MAE
Sara...how in the world can you
tell Kitty's a Jew?

SARA
I can tell!

STANLEY
Yeah! My wife and I can tell!

CARRIE
Reverend Klawitter...Mr. and Mrs.
Patterson...these performers are
the twenty-three best female
musicians in town.

THEODORE
Do you understand how this looks,
Mrs. Knight?

Albert grits his teeth...so do some LWSO members.

CARRIE

With all due respect, twenty women,
two teenagers, and one little girl
have been fighting for this chance--

STANLEY

Look, Little Miss History Teacher,
I don't care if they've been
fighting Max Baer or Primo Car--

Chloe struts over to the group around the podium.

CHLOE

Will somebody tell us what's up?

JEANNE

(shouting toward podium)
ARE WE GONNA PLAY OR NOT?

Spectators and musicians AD LIB their reactions when Theodore
waves his hands to quiet the crowd.

When he receives his quiet:

THEODORE

We're sorry...but today's concert
has been canceled.

Some people shed tears...other people look flabbergasted.

Rochelle scowls at Ida Mae...Douglas eyes Lillian.

DOUGLAS

(snaps his fingers)
Aw, shoot.

LILLIAN

That wouldn't be a bad idea.

INT. CARRIE'S AND PAUL'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Paul and Carrie stare out the window from their fave seats.

CARRIE

Well...Lula Mae turned in her
resignation as organist at M Street
Methodist Episcopal.

PAUL

I can't really blame her.

He jumps up from his seat and grabs today's "Sunday Journal
and Star" from the coffee table.

CARRIE
Yeah, Paul. They did make a deal.

PAUL
(sits down with paper)
Carrie...what about that church Ida
Mae and Raymond go to?

Paul pulls out the newspaper section he wants, then offers the rest of the paper to Carrie.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Think they'd like to host the
Lincoln Women's Symphony
Orchestra's first concert?

Carrie accepts the rest of the paper. She yanks out the section she desires, then looks up at Paul.

CARRIE
I don't know.
(folds section out)
I get the feeling Stanley and Sara
Patterson would find the church and
burn it down.

Paul looks up from his newspaper section to eyeball Carrie.

CARRIE (CONT'D)
(looks up from section)
While we were playing the "1812
Overture."

PAUL
What about the Nebraska Coliseum?

CARRIE
Eileen told me they wouldn't like
to host a mixed-race event.

Carrie watches Paul shake his head sideways.

PAUL
Really ironic how all this is going
on in a city named after the man
who freed the slaves.

CARRIE
Even if he was born in Kentucky...a
slave state.

She places the rest of the newspaper on the floor.

EXT. EILEEN'S HOUSE - DAY

This somewhat-modest, two-story house in the city's Antelope Park neighborhood features a front porch.

INT. EILEEN'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Eileen brings a plate of cookies from the kitchen into her heavily-furnished living room...where Carrie, Leo, Lily, Mabel, and Paul sit on a sofa and high-backed chairs.

EILEEN

Help yourselves, everybody!

Soon as Eileen places the plate of cookies on a coffee table, her five guests grab some of the goodies.

Coffee cups, tea cups, and a milk glass already rest on the coffee table.

Mabel takes a bite...and comes away impressed.

MABEL

Eileen, did you make these?

EILEEN

I absolutely, positively, certainly did, Mabel.

Some heads nod in approval.

MABEL

Before we go...can you give me the recipe?

Eileen grabs the bench from her ornate grand piano, then sets the bench closer to her guests.

EILEEN

(sits down on bench)

You bet I will.

CARRIE

Speaking of recipe...Paul and I have been racking our brains trying to find a place where the LWSO can actually debut.

LEO

(between bites)

Without them pulling the rug out from under the orchestra.

LILY
 That's for sure, Pa.
 (downs her milk)
 It's enough to make a Dean dizzy.

PAUL
 You know, Leo, that same church
 hosted the all-male Lincoln
 Symphony Orchestra's debut concert.

LEO
 I remember that. Eight years ago.

Now Eileen jumps up and grabs a cookie.

EILEEN
 (returns to bench)
 I remember that, too...and they
 welcomed them with open arms.

CARRIE
 And Stanley and Sara Patterson were
 part of the welcoming committee.

Lily jumps up from her seat and wanders over to Eileen's
 other ivories...a 1920s upright player piano.

The violin virtuoso raises the fallboard, tests out a few
 keys, and turns to the oldest LWSO member.

LILY
 Eileen, I heard that you used to
 play for silent pictures at the
 Lincoln Theater.

EILEEN
 (between bites)
 I did...right after the University
 of Nebraska got rid of me.

Lily sits down on the player piano's stool.

EILEEN (CONT'D)
 June of 1925...a month after the
 Lincoln Theater opened.

LILY
 Did you get to play the piano?

EILEEN
 Sometimes...the rest of the time,
 they had me play the Wurlitzer.

Eileen jumps back up to grab her coffee cup.

EILEEN (CONT'D)
 That pipe organ took some getting
 used to...hey, everybody!
 (sits on bench again)
 Why don't we get the Lincoln
 Theater for our first concert?

Five stunned faces greet Eileen.

LEO
 A movie house?

The ex-professor shakes her head "yes."

EILEEN
 It's worth a shot.

Carrie receives a hopeful look from Eileen.

CARRIE
 It just might work.

LILY
 Why not?

Mabel counts on her fingers.

MABEL
 It's too cold for Antelope
 Park...and the bandstand's too
 small, anyway...

CARRIE
 Let's give the Lincoln Theater a
 try. After all, Eileen once
 accompanied silent movies there.

Two...three...four heads nod at Carrie.

PAUL
 As long as nobody throws popcorn
 boxes on the stage, it'll work.

A huge smile covers Eileen's face.

INT. UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA COM DINING ROOM - DAY

At the podium, Lily, Eileen, and Carrie face the remaining
 Lincoln Women's Symphony performers (all seated in the
 orchestra setup).

ESTHER

We're gonna follow a motion picture? I don't know.

CARRIE

Eileen, Lily, and I explored all the possibilities...and we've come to the conclusion that a movie theater is the safest bet for us.

Some orchestra members nod.

LILY

Right now.

ROCHELLE

We're supposed to be respectable...and we're settling for a movie house?

JUNE

Rochelle, have you got any better places in mind?

Rochelle stares in anger at June.

ANITA

Places that'll let all twenty-three of us play?

Kitty and Ida Mae receive Rochelle's facial wrath, too.

OLIVE

(eyeballing Rochelle)

I figured: "If a theater can show 'Our Gang' films, then it oughta let our orchestra play there, too."

Olive's remark gains AD LIBBED support from a few players.

Edythe eyes tablemates Raymond, Joe, Jimmy, Paul, and Solomon.

EDYTHE

And Joe, you can take comfort in telling your pals that Jerrine's coming soon to a theater near you.

Jimmy catches Joe's openmouthed look.

JIMMY

Edythe's got a point.

The dining room roars with laughter.

CARRIE

So...all those in favor of
accepting an April twenty-sixth
engagement at the Lincoln Theater,
raise your hands.

Ida Mae's, June's, Kitty's, Carrie's, Eileen's, Lily's,
Olive's, Anita's, Edythe's, and Jerrine's hands shoot up.

JANE

They won't back out on their
promise, will they?

EILEEN

You've got our word, Jane.

A nodding Jane raises her hand...Nannette, Jeanne, Katharine,
Constance, Corinne, Chloe, Grace Anne, and Helen follow suit.

Constance turns to a still-skeptical Lula Mae.

CONSTANCE

Don't worry...the Pattersons won't
be there. They'd never be caught
dead seeing a picture show.

LULA MAE

You've won me over.

Lula Mae raises her hand...Aida and Claudia do, too.

HELEN

Esther, it looks like you and
Rochelle will miss out on all the
fun that's in store.

Rochelle and Esther make it unanimous...and trigger cheers
from the throng.

SAME SCENE - A BIT LATER

Ida Mae sets her bass fiddle aside and meets Carrie at the
front of the orchestra setup.

IDA MAE

Carrie, I hope you don't mind. I've
just got a little idea I'd like us
to try.

CARRIE

It's all right.

Rochelle grits her teeth at Ida Mae.

ROCHELLE
So...you've got ideas, huh?

AIDA
Rochelle...please listen.

Aida catches Rochelle's scowl.

CORINNE
Ida Mae, as long as your idea helps
the orchestra as a whole, we'll be
happy with it.

IDA MAE
Thanks, Corinne.
(scanning the room)
If you play at least three
instruments, raise your hand.

Some musicians eyeball one another in confusion...others do
so in anticipation.

IDA MAE (CONT'D)
Go ahead. It's okay.

Ida Mae raises her hand...Katharine, Kitty, Jerrine, Grace
Anne, Chloe, Corinne, Jane, Nannette, Lula Mae, and Edythe
send their hands skyward, too.

And Claudia's hand shoots straight up.

ROCHELLE
(to Ida Mae)
What's the point? You trying to
make the rest of us look bad?

JEANNE
Rochelle, you're doing a good job
of that yourself.

Rochelle jumps out of her seat to go after Jeanne...only to
sit right back down.

IDA MAE
I'm not trying to make anybody look
bad or feel bad. All I'm trying to
do is take a page from Phil
Spitalny's radio show.

Carrie looks ecstatic.

IDA MAE (CONT'D)

On his show, all the orchestra members sing in addition to playing at least two musical instruments.

CLAUDIA

Sing?

IDA MAE

No, Claudia. We're not gonna sing.

Claudia breathes relief.

IDA MAE (CONT'D)

I just thought, since we're playing at the Lincoln Theater, the twelve of us who play three or more instruments could do two numbers in the middle of the concert.

CARRIE

Hey...I really like that idea.

IDA MAE

Pop numbers...like "Alexander's Ragtime Band."

Ida Mae's fellow multiinstrumentalists AD LIB their approval.

EILEEN

Don't worry...our concert will start and end with all twenty-three of us playing classical selections.

IDA MAE

That's right, Eileen!

JERRINE

I see...it's sort of a Boston Pops thing in the middle of our concert.

Ida Mae shakes her head "yes."

HELEN

It's all about versatility.

LILY

I see what you mean, Ida Mae...we can offer our audiences something no other symphony orchestra can.

ROCHELLE

Schizo...a split personality.

Some LWSO members try to stifle their chuckles.

ANITA

(wags finger at Rochelle)
 You know, I've heard you play
 guitar...and if you were to take up
 one more instrument, you could join
 in this experiment, too.

Jeanne and Katharine groan.

ESTHER

Ida Mae...what would happen if you
 raised the minimum number of
 instruments to four?

NANNETTE

Then I'd have to drop out.

KITTY

Perish the thought, Nannette. You
 taught me how to play this licorice
 stick in the first place.

Kitty holds up her clarinet for all to see.

EXT. LINCOLN THEATER - NIGHT

SOME PEOPLE wipe their sweaty brows on the way to this four-
 story palace during this sweltering Friday night.

INT. LINCOLN THEATER LOWER LEVEL - NIGHT

A MOVIE ("Goin' to Town") heads for the finish in front of A
 PACKED HOUSE.

Sara and Stanley sit in the first row.

SARA

(gazing at Stanley)
 Nice change of pace, isn't it?

STANLEY

Thank you for talking me into it.

Willard and Edgar watch from seats in a middle row.

EDGAR

I don't know, Willard.

WILLARD

Edgar...don't give me that.

EDGAR

What does it say about a symphony orchestra when its concertmaster is a twelve-year-old girl?

"THE END" greets the applauding moviegoers...and:

LILY (O.S.)

Ladies and gentlemen...the Lincoln Theater proudly presents...performing for the first time...the Lincoln Women's Symphony Orchestra!

Muriel occupies an aisle seat toward the back...and joins in the applause. Albert sits on the aisle's other side, where he claps, too.

The screen gives way to a stage...where Carrie (she stands at a podium) and her twenty-three musicians (in an orchestra setup) wear tuxedos instead of gowns.

Result: The applause down there gives way to laughter.

From their own back seats, Bud and wife VELMA CAMPBELL (40s) drop their popcorn.

He notices the two drum sets and the two pianos (a grand and an 1890s upright whose hammers stand exposed).

BUD

What is this, Velma? A symphony orchestra or a dance band?

VELMA

Just sit back and listen.

Stanley and Sara sprint out of the theater.

MURIEL

Where're you two going?

STANLEY

To the bathroom!

SARA

For a long, long while!

INT. LINCOLN THEATER BALCONY - NIGHT

Beatrice and Caroline operate movie cameras while Thelma, Patrice, Lillian, Douglas, Bobby, and their folks join with Walt, Solomon, Raymond, Paul, Mabel, Leo, Joe, Jimmy, Flournoy, and Carter in continuing their applause.

INT. LINCOLN THEATER STAGE - NIGHT

Carrie turns to the audience.

CARRIE

Ladies and gentlemen...since you just got through watching Mae West's latest picture, why not continue the fun?

Some customers clap.

CARRIE (CONT'D)

With that in mind...our opening number is a proven favorite...Peter Tchaikovsky's "1812 Overture."

Carrie readies the orchestra...and Ida Mae, June, Esther, Helen, and Lily nail the piece's slow beginning.

INT. LINCOLN THEATER LOWER LEVEL - NIGHT

Edgar and Willard pay close attention as the LWSO brings "1812 Overture" to a rousing close...on the strength of Jane's tympani work and Katharine's and Jeanne's drumming.

The applause kicks back in...and Albert turns to THOSE CUSTOMERS AROUND HIM.

ALBERT

Don't let anybody tell you a woman isn't strong enough to lead a symphony orchestra.

Willard and Edgar sink in their seats as patrons applaud around them.

INT. LINCOLN THEATER STAGE - NIGHT

The remaining orchestra members give Kitty a solid musical background while she plays Frederic Chopin's "Waltz in A Minor..." on a chromatic harmonica.

Kitty frees a hand to wave at Solomon...who waves back.

SAME SCENE - A BIT LATER

The Lincoln Women's Symphony powers through the second movement of Florence Price's "Symphony No. 1 in E Minor."

Aida, Anita, Edythe, Grace Anne, Lula Mae, Nannette, Olive, Rochelle, and a Kitty who's back on clarinet lead the way.

Chloe adds a conga drum...and Claudia raps on the grand piano while Eileen follows suit on the ol' upright.

Jane's, Jeanne's, and Katharine's percussion work shines.

INT. LINCOLN THEATER BALCONY - NIGHT

Orchestra husbands, boyfriend, parents, buddies, and classmates look some kind of impressed.

INT. LINCOLN THEATER STAGE - NIGHT

The stage thins down to the twelve LWSO members who play three or more instruments.

It's Scott Joplin's "Bethena;" in it, Ida Mae plays the grand piano and Nannette the 1890-99 upright piano...while Jerrine plays the theater's three-manual Wurlitzer pipe organ.

Chloe and Katharine strum guitars and Kitty plucks a banjo...Corinne and Jane play cellos.

Grace Anne and Lula Mae blow flutes...and Claudia and Edythe keep the beat on the two drum sets.

INT. LINCOLN THEATER LOWER LEVEL - NIGHT

An enthusiastic Muriel turns to THOSE AROUND HER.

MURIEL

Haven't heard that in a long time.

INT. LINCOLN THEATER STAGE - NIGHT

The Dynamic Dozen need only one drum set for "Tip Toe through the Tulips with Me." And Kitty pounds those skins.

Chloe bangs the grand piano and Katharine the Nineteenth-Century upright...and Lula Mae plays the Mighty Wurlitzer.

Jane and Jerrine fiddle away on violins...Ida Mae plucks a mandolin, Corinne and Nannette shred on guitars, and Claudia plays banjo.

And Edythe and Grace Anne lead the way on trumpet and tenor sax, respectively.

INT. LINCOLN THEATER BALCONY - NIGHT

Jimmy beams at those around him.

JIMMY

That's my girlfriend down there!

A happy Raymond wags a finger at Jimmy.

INT. LINCOLN THEATER LOWER LEVEL - NIGHT

Velma and Bud bob their heads to the beat.

VELMA

Bud...would you like to dance?

BUD

Doggone right!

The Two Campbells stand up...only to receive jeers.

So Bud and Velma sit down and stomp their feet to the beat!

INT. LINCOLN THEATER STAGE - NIGHT

With the full orchestra back onstage, Eileen and Katharine (both at the grand piano) launch Franz Liszt's "Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2."

Musically, Eileen returns home...and looks ecstatic.

Four bars later, Claudia and Jerrine (both at the 1890s upright) jump in...four bars afterwards, Carrie and Chloe (both play an additional piano...a 1920s upright whose hammers stand exposed) come in to make it a twelve-hands, three-keyboards affair.

For this version, a new conductor emerges: Lily.

INT. LINCOLN THEATER BALCONY - NIGHT

Mabel, Leo, and Paul look awestruck.

INT. LINCOLN THEATER LOWER LEVEL - NIGHT

Edgar and Willard eyeball each other in bewilderment.

INT. LINCOLN THEATER STAGE - NIGHT

Carrie leads the LWSO again...June, Ida Mae, Lily, Helen, and Esther join with flutists Corinne and Constance to bring "Largo," from Antonin Dvorak's "New World Symphony," to a peaceful, dirgelike end.

An arpeggio from harpist Jerrine sets up violinist Lily to play the piece's final twenty-seven bars...unaccompanied.

Dead silence...for a few seconds.

Then applause erupts...and grows.

Carrie takes center stage, where she bows. Her twenty-three musicians follow suit.

INT. LINCOLN THEATER BALCONY - NIGHT

Paul, Mabel, Leo, Raymond, Joe, Jimmy, Solomon, Thelma, Patrice, and Gwendolyn stand up while they keep applauding.

Walt, Lillian, Flournoy, Douglas, Carter, and Bobby jump up from their seats in continuing to hail the orchestra.

Caroline and Beatrice turn their cameras off, then eye one another as the standing ovation grows into the lower level.

CAROLINE

Well, Beatrice, they did it.

BEATRICE

(points to cameras)

Well...so did we!

A proud, proud Leo continues to clap...but now, he bursts into heavy tears.

Mabel wipes tears from her own eyes to hug her husband.

EXT. 27TH STREET VIADUCT - DAY

Carrie and Paul stand near the viaduct to fish Salt Creek.

PAUL

Great job last night, Carrie.

CARRIE

Hey, thanks, Paul.

The conductor and her hubby attempt to kiss...despite the presence of their fishing rods.

CARRIE (CONT'D)

Just remember: You and friends and those twenty-three great musicians did all the heavy lifting.

Something tugs at Carrie's line.

CARRIE (CONT'D)
Time to put you in the
spotlight...how'd it go at the
furniture store?

PAUL
Well...we had to repossess a chest
of drawers this morning...

Carrie raises her rod with all her might...she reels
something in...when WESTON FISCHER (40s) strolls toward the
Knights with his own fishing rod.

WESTON
Mind if I join you two?

PAUL
Be our guest!

As Weston stops alongside Paul and Carrie, she pulls...a
minnow from her rod.

WESTON
(to Carrie)
I saw you and your orchestra
perform last night.

CARRIE
You're...kidding...

Weston sticks his pole into the same creek into which Carrie
tosses the minnow.

WESTON
You've got a very innovative
organization here in Lincoln.

CARRIE
Thanks...it's just that our
musicians make all the difference.
It's all tailored to their talents.

WESTON
No wonder you can get away with
playing Chopin with a harmonica.

PAUL
(points to Weston)
And the LWSO has a flute player who
also plays bagpipes...and
guitar...when she isn't a butcher
at the grocery store downtown...

WESTON

That's it! After all, Phil Spitalny doesn't have to have the only all-girl orchestra on the radio!

Carrie perks up.

CARRIE

That's my favorite show!

WESTON

One of our Lincoln listeners likes "The Hour of Charm," too...but told us she'd like to hear a local version, too.

Weston catches Paul's and Carrie's shocked looks.

PAUL

You must be from Omaha.

WESTON

I'm Weston Fischer...and I'm the program director at WAAW in Omaha.

Carrie, Paul, and Weston shake hands.

WESTON (CONT'D)

We've been trying to find a hit for our Sunday mid-afternoon lineup.

CARRIE

Paul and I listen to WAAW once in a while. We can pick up Omaha clearly from here.

Weston's eyes light up.

WESTON

How'd you like to bring the Lincoln Women's Symphony to the airwaves?

CARRIE

Mr. Fischer...as long as our orchestra members are amenable to that, we'll be glad to do it. Just give us two weeks to decide.

WESTON

Fair enough!

Weston, Paul, and Carrie shake hands once more.

PAUL

Mr. Fischer, you fish here often?

WESTON

Yes, I do...it's just that the fish here in Salt Creek taste better than the ones I catch along the Missouri River.

Each fishing partner chuckles.

EXT. WALDBAUM'S CLOTHING - DAY

It's on the ground floor of a downtown brick building.

INT. WALDBAUM'S CLOTHING SALESFLOOR - DAY

Solomon and Kitty click coffee mugs during a business lull.

SOLOMON

Okay...so they didn't have cake at the Lincoln Theater last Friday night. It's all right.

KITTY

True...but all the orchestra members, spouses, and friends were invited to help themselves to all the popcorn, candy, and soda pop they could handle.

Kitty takes a drink and Solomon nods when Bobby, dad WARNER ENSLEY (50s), and mom WHITNEY EDISON ENSLEY (50s) stroll in.

SOLOMON

Come into our store! How may we help you?

WARNER

Bobby and I wanna buy a new suit.

BOBBY

Each.

KITTY

(sets her mug down)
You've come to the right place.

WHITNEY

To tell you the truth, Kitty, I'd like to buy a new suit, too.

Warner and Bobby stare at Whitney.

WHITNEY (CONT'D)

Well, Warner...Bobby...I saw how good Kitty looked in a tux.

Kitty looks flattered.

SOLOMON

She does, doesn't she, Whitney?

Whitney shakes her head "yes."

WHITNEY

And I figured: "If Willa Cather can wear a man's suit, I can, too."

BOBBY

Wait a minute, Ma...you mean the same Willa Cather that writes books and stuff like that?

WARNER

Son...I didn't know she wore suits.

A nodding Kitty runs off to get a tape measure.

EXT. GRAIN EXCHANGE BUILDING, OMAHA, NE - DAY

The Lincoln Women's Symphony Orchestra, its conductor, and their main support group haul instruments toward an ornate eight-story downtown edifice.

ESTHER

I just don't get it. Why aren't we auditioning at a Lincoln station?

RAYMOND

KFOR and KFAB don't know what they're missing.

AIDA

Perhaps their Sunday schedules are already spoken and accounted for.

KATHARINE

Hey, at least we're getting a shot!

Quite a few heads nod in agreement with Katharine.

INT. GRAIN EXCHANGE BUILDING SEVENTH FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

Weston strolls the hallway with LYLE SAMPSON (60s).

WESTON

Mr. Sampson, we're very well aware that this is Aksarben Seeds' first entry into radio...and we want to put your company in the best light.

LYLE

You'd better!

The two men reach a glass door that reads, in large letters: "WAAW." In smaller letters: "660 KILOCYCLES."

LYLE (CONT'D)

If a tire company can sponsor a show with nothin' but classical music, why can't a seed company?

Weston opens the door and gestures Lyle inside.

INT. WAAW MAIN STUDIO AT GRAIN EXCHANGE BUILDING - DAY

Carrie leads the LWSO through Amy Beach's "Gaelic Symphony."

The piece's modulating intro features Lily, June, Ida Mae, Helen, and Esther (all on strings) teaming up with Edythe, Corinne, Constance, and Aida (all four on woodwinds).

After about eight bars, Rochelle, Olive, Lula Mae, Grace Anne, and Anita toot their way in...Katharine, Jeanne, and Jane drum their way in while Chloe adds her marimba.

A minute or so into the number, Nannette and Kitty add their clarinets, Jerrine her harp, and Eileen and Claudia their pianos (a couple of spinets or pre-1929 uprights).

INT. WAAW MAIN STUDIO CONTROL BOOTH - DAY

But Lyle and Weston can't see the musicians at work...a series of bedsheets covers the glass.

Weston enjoys the music...but Lyle looks stonefaced.

LYLE

What's with the bedsheets?

WESTON

We just wanted you to focus on the music...after all, this is radio.

Lyle's nod is ever-so-slow.

INT. WAAW EMPLOYEE LOUNGE AT GRAIN EXCHANGE BUILDING - DAY

Solomon, Raymond, Paul, Joe, and Jimmy listen to the audition through a PA system.

JOE

So...that's how they're gonna sound
on the radio...

SOLOMON

Joe, that depends on the radio.

INT. WAAW MAIN STUDIO AT GRAIN EXCHANGE BUILDING - DAY

The orchestra brings "Gaelic Symphony" to a rousing,
triumphant end.

The twenty-three musicians and the conductor watch the door
open...and Weston and Lyle bounce in.

WESTON

Everyone...I'd like you to meet
Lyle Sampson. He's the president of
Aksarben Seeds, Inc.

Lyle's eyes go wide once he eyeballs Ida Mae and Kitty.

Carrie and Co. sport that hopeful look as the seated
musicians jump out of their chairs. Chloe, Ida Mae, and Jane
walk away from their respective instruments.

CARRIE

(extends hand to Lyle)
Hi...my name's Carrie Hainlen
Knight...and I'd like you to meet
the members of...

Lyle gives back a withering look.

LYLE

Get rid of that colored girl on
bass and that Jewish girl on
clarinet...and you can be on my
program.

Weston bites his lip...Carrie blows an imaginary
bubble...Lily looks down at the floor...Jeanne seethes at
Lyle...Ida Mae, Grace Anne, and Kitty shrug.

Hurt shows up on most LWSO faces.

And Rochelle stares daggers at Kitty and Ida Mae.

WESTON

You orchestra members have worked hard for this...we at WAAW really appreciate that.

JUNE

Thank you for this chance, Weston.

Lyle continues to bristle...a forlorn Weston nods.

WESTON

It's radio...and in the radio industry, the advertisers call all the shots.

Weston and Lyle saunter away from the room.

JEANNE

Hey, Lyle! How do you know Kitty's a Jew?

LYLE

(on his way out)
I can tell!

Lyle slams the door as Chloe sticks her tongue out at him.

LYLE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Hey, Weston! You know any colored farmers around here?

Rochelle charges toward Ida Mae.

ROCHELLE

YOU! You've cost us! Twice! You and that damn--

IDA MAE

Now wait just a minute!

The trumpet-playing food server takes a swing at the bass-playing barber...but Katharine grabs Rochelle from behind.

Rochelle fights the grip, works her way free, and...slams Ida Mae's bass to the floor. The instrument shatters.

Everybody else in the room looks stunned or infuriated...for a few seconds.

Rochelle charges after Kitty...but:

KITTY

Don't even think about it.

Ida Mae looks at her now-destroyed bass, then at a Rochelle who storms out of the studio.

IDA MAE
YOU OWE ME ANOTHER BASS!

Musicians and conductor watch Rochelle slam the door shut on her way out.

EXT. SUPERIOR STREET VIADUCT, LINCOLN, NE - DAY

Carrie and Paul fish Salt Creek...from a different location.

He catches her grim look.

PAUL
If you catch any fish this
afternoon, I'll clean 'em. And if I
catch any, you clean 'em.

They shake hands...but hers is a limp grip.

CARRIE
Kitty and Ida Mae told me they'd
had enough. They don't want to work
with Rochelle anymore.

PAUL
Well...some of the other orchestra
members have said Rochelle's a real
drain on the orchestra.

CARRIE
(with a slow nod)
She's such an excellent trumpeter.

Paul baits his hook.

CARRIE (CONT'D)
One of the best in town...male or
female. Even Edgar Stockwell said
so...to my face.

Carrie's husband sticks his line back into the water.

PAUL
As talented as Rochelle is...is it
really worth it to keep her in the
orchestra?

She does a doubletake.

PAUL (CONT'D)

I know you like to give people a chance. You're one of the first to forgive folks seventy times seven.

Paul's wife flashes a sweet smile.

CARRIE

That's the way I was raised.

PAUL

Still...she's the one who needs to go...not Kitty or Ida Mae.

Carrie studies the Salt Creek current, then turns to Paul.

CARRIE

If that's what the other musicians want...so be it.

He studies her for a little bit.

PAUL

Sounds pretty good to me, dear.

The twosome look at the water before he eyes her again.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Carrie...what if we both strike out trying to catch fish today?

CARRIE

Paul...never say "never."

An impish look invades Paul's face.

INT. ARD'S BARBER SHOP - DAY

Opening time awaits...Raymond and Ida Mae sweep the place up.

IDA MAE

You know, Raymond, I left Little Rock to get away from all this.

RAYMOND

Yeah...you beat Florence Price outa there by four years.

Ida Mae sweeps her dust into a dustpan.

IDA MAE
 I knew darn well they wouldn't let
 me go after a music degree down
 South...so...

She empties the dustpan into a wastebasket.

IDA MAE (CONT'D)
 I came up here to Lincoln.

RAYMOND
 And just like Carrie did when she
 went to the U of Nebraska, you
 hooked up with Eileen.

A nodding Ida Mae sets the dustpan on the floor so that
 Raymond can use the dustpan, too.

IDA MAE
 And some of the other music
 professors got Eileen fired because
 she really took a shine to me.

Ida Mae sticks her broom into a corner.

IDA MAE (CONT'D)
 Those other profs kept talking
 about how people my color don't
 appreciate the classics.

RAYMOND
 I hear you. They were dead wrong!

Raymond sends his dust into the same dustpan.

IDA MAE
 And that's not all! Once I hook up
 with the LWSO, Kitty and I get
 blamed for us not playing in a
 church...or on the radio!

He goes to the wastebasket...

RAYMOND
 And they were pure-dee wrong.

...and empties the dustpan there.

IDA MAE
 I've had it!
 (walks toward window)

IDA MAE (CONT'D)

Our people making music has been a sore spot for too many White people ever since Scott Joplin wrote "Maple Leaf Rag."

Raymond drops his broom, then saunters over to the window.

RAYMOND

Ida Mae...listen to yourself.

The two husband-and-wife barbers hold hands.

IDA MAE

Flournoy will be glad to know I'm giving up trying to play music. And Rochelle will really be glad. And Lyle...and Stanley...and Sara...

RAYMOND

Come on.

(hugs Ida Mae)

You know I didn't marry a quitter.

Ida Mae completes the embrace...and buries her head in Raymond's chest.

INT. WALDBAUM'S CLOTHING SALESFLOOR - DAY

Kitty and Solomon watch as Bobby, Warner, and Whitney (all three in suits and slacks) try out fedoras.

Each Ensley gravitates to a mirror...and looks satisfied.

KITTY

Those hats fit each of you fine.

WARNER

Thanks a bunch, Kitty.

Bobby glances up at Kitty.

BOBBY

I saw Lily at school this mornin'.

KITTY

How's she doing?

BOBBY

She was down in the dumps...she told me you and Ida Mae quit the Lincoln Women's Symphony.

Kitty's is a slow, slow nod.

SOLOMON

Their first-chair trumpeter ran them out.

KITTY

She blamed me and Ida Mae for us losing a chance to play on the radio...on an Omaha station.

Whitney, Warner, and Bobby (each with a hat in hands) head for the counter; Solomon and Kitty follow.

SOLOMON

What's more, that trumpet player broke Ida Mae's bass fiddle.

WHITNEY

That's enough to make Jack Benny quit eating Jell-O.

The Ensleys hand their purchases to the Waldbaums.

WARNER

(hands money to Kitty)

We wish you two wouldn't quit.

A nodding Kitty accepts the money...and gives the change (if any) to Warner.

WHITNEY

Yeah. Don't let that Rochelle get under your skin. Or Ida Mae's.

BOBBY

(pointing to Kitty)

You really tore up that Lincoln Theater a coupla weeks ago.

Solomon grabs three hat boxes from behind the counter...but:

WARNER

Solomon, is it okay if we wear these out the door?

SOLOMON

Of course.

Bobby and his parents grab their newly-purchased fedoras while Solomon sticks the hat boxes back behind the counter.

KITTY

Thank you three for coming.

Warner, Bobby, and Whitney don their hats on the way out.
Whitney turns back to eyeball Solomon and Kitty.

WHITNEY
(tipping her fedora)
Pleasure's ours.

With the Ensley family out the door, the Two Waldbaums eye one another.

SOLOMON
You know it's the truth.

Solomon holds Kitty's hands.

SOLOMON (CONT'D)
It isn't your fault...it isn't Ida
Mae's fault. It's all on the man
from the seed company.

KITTY
(slow, slow nod)
Sounds like he really needs to get
out and see the world...

Kitty and Solomon hug...as ANOTHER CUSTOMER struts inside.

INT. UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA COM DINING ROOM - DAY

Carrie and twenty of her remaining LWSO performers chit chat
away from the orchestra setup prior to rehearsal.

Jerrine stares at the book in her hands.

JERRINE
I really thought we were over this.

CONSTANCE
Over what, Jerrine?

JERRINE
Constance, take a look at this.

Constance accepts the book from Jerrine.

CONSTANCE
(reads cover)
"How to Be a Hollywood Star," by--

JERRINE
Joe's brother gave me this.

The flute-playing bookkeeper hands the tome back to the harp-playing music teacher.

JERRINE (CONT'D)
 (accepts book)
 I'm thinking about burning this.

CONSTANCE
 No! Don't do that! Didn't you tell me you've got a younger brother?

Rochelle (trumpet case in tow) jogs into the room.

CONSTANCE (CONT'D)
 And that he wants to be the next Henry Fonda? Or the next--

A sprinting Olive stretches out her arms to block Rochelle.

OLIVE
 You can't come back here.

ROCHELLE
 I sure as Hell can!

Constance lifts a chair from the same table Jimmy, Joe, and Paul occupy.

She sets the chair in an empty spot away from the setup.

CONSTANCE
 Now that you're here, Rochelle Marie Colclough...have a seat.

Constance gestures Rochelle into the chair.

When Rochelle sits down, Olive gestures the remaining nineteen musicians into a circle around Rochelle. Two of them make space for Carrie in the circle.

Those who encircle Rochelle hold hands.

OLIVE
 Okay...who'd like to start?

LILY
 Olive, I'd like to start.

Rochelle jumps out of her seat to lunge after somebody.

JEANNE
 SIDDOWN!

ROCHELLE

Make me!

EILEEN

Rochelle, sit your glutius maximus
down! Right now!

CARRIE

And you're going to hear us out.

A shrugging Rochelle returns to her chair.

LILY

First of all, Rochelle...what you
did was bush league.

Corinne nods at Lily, then at Rochelle.

CORINNE

You're one of the most talented
trumpet players I've ever
heard...male or female. Period.

Rochelle gives Corinne a smirk.

CORINNE (CONT'D)

It hurts to find out you've got
such a talent for bigotry, too.

JUNE

Corinne's right. When Carrie first
thought of this, she was looking
for the best female musicians in
town...no matter what race, color,
or religion.

ROCHELLE

Well, Phil Spit...Spit...Spit-on-Me
has nothing but White ladies in--

Carrie grimaces.

JERRINE

That's them. With Ida Mae and
Kitty, we had an edge on Phil's
orchestra. We had that swing...

Constance shakes her head "yes" before she turns to Rochelle.

CONSTANCE

Whether you know it or not, whether
you like it or not...musical talent
isn't the province of one race.

CHLOE

I went to Ard's Barber Shop the other day...and Ida Mae told me that after you broke her bass, she cried all the way home.

Rochelle gives Chloe a "so what?" look.

HELEN

Rochelle...how can you expect to come back here after you destroyed another musician's bass fiddle?

Esther stares darts at Rochelle.

ESTHER

You can't.

Rochelle stays in the hot seat while the grilling continues.

KATHARINE

Haven't you ever seen those "Our Gang" comedies, Rochelle? Don't you remember when Eddie Tolan won those gold medals in Los Angeles three years ago?

The woman in the hot seat looks lost.

JANE

Katharine, I think I've got something that'll work.

Katharine nods at Jane, who turns her attention to Rochelle.

JANE (CONT'D)

You know, Miss Colclough...all of us in here have tasted rejection in our quest to be musicians. So it wasn't fair for you to heap more rejection on Kitty and Ida Mae.

NANNETTE

It hurts...I remember when Jane, June, Aida, Constance, and I tried out for the Lincoln Symphony when they got it started in '27.

AIDA

They told us: "You don't belong here! Go back home and go to the kitchen and defrost something!"

LULA MAE

So...Rochelle...when you destroyed
Ida Mae's bass, you practiced
rejection. All your needling is
rejection, too.

Rochelle looks infuriated.

JEANNE

Listen up, Rochelle. Be an adult.

GRACE ANNE

How would you like somebody to
wreck your trumpet...your pride and
joy? Your source of fun?

Joe, Jimmy, and Paul rise from their seats. The three men
join the circle and grasp hands.

JIMMY

Rochelle...answer Grace Anne.

They watch Rochelle shake her head sideways.

EDYTHE

You and I were in the same
graduating class. Class of '28.

Rochelle fields Edythe's pained look.

EDYTHE (CONT'D)

You were just as hate-filled then
as you are now.

ROCHELLE

Wait a damn minute--

EDYTHE

Hear me out. Had I had darker skin,
you would've treated me as badly as
you did Ida Mae. I was afraid to go
to your house because of your Ku
Klux Klan parents.

Claudia takes a deep breath before she addresses Rochelle.

CLAUDIA

I...I remember reading in the paper
your dad and an uncle of
yours shot each other to death
because they disagreed about Eddie
Tolan being in the Olympics.

Rochelle stares in anger at Claudia.

CLAUDIA (CONT'D)

And I read where your mom chose to bleed to death instead of receiving a transfusion from a janitor who had the same blood type as you. Your mom didn't like the janitor's skin color.

LILY

Yeah. That janitor's daughter goes to the same school I do.

ROCHELLE

(bolting up)

Why you--

JOE

You need to sit down.

Rochelle sits down again.

ANITA

Rochelle...maybe there's a Ku Klux Klan rally you can play for.

A few in the circle laugh.

OLIVE

We don't need people who are gonna tear down what we're trying to build...and that includes from within. So you can't stay here.

AD LIBBED agreement greets Olive's remark.

EILEEN

Face it, Rochelle. You're through.

The circle breaks...Rochelle jumps up, kicks the chair aside, and (trumpet case and all) storms toward the door.

CARRIE

Wait!

Rochelle stops at the door.

CARRIE (CONT'D)

If you want to come back...you'll have to fix Ida Mae's bass first...with your own money...and then apologize to her.

Now Rochelle's mouth flies open.

CARRIE (CONT'D)
And Kitty. And the rest of us.

PAUL
Rochelle, do you understand?

She flies out the door without an answer.

Many musicians breathe relief...Chloe seeks Claudia.

CHLOE
What paper did you read that in?
The "Journal" or the "Star?"

CLAUDIA
Well, uh...I read it in both.

INT. WILLARD SCHOOL MUSIC ROOM - DAY

The school orchestra works on another light classical number.

This time, Thelma, Patrice, Douglas, and Bobby show real improvement in their effort to catch up to Lily.

And Willard continues to struggle to conduct!

Carrie watches it all from the back of the room...and applauds at the end of the selection.

WILLARD
Well, uh...thank you.

CARRIE
You deserve it. Our school's
orchestra's really come along these
last four months.

Most of the children bow...others look stunned.

WILLARD
Carrie...I mean Mrs.
Knight...what's on your mind?

Carrie walks toward the orchestra setup.

DOUGLAS
Whatever it is, Mr. Willschultz...I
hope it's good.

LILY
Don't worry, Douglas. It's good.

Lily gazes at Carrie.

CARRIE
Would you like to do the honors?

In surprise, Lily turns to Thelma.

LILY
Thelma, an opening has come up in
the Lincoln Women's Symphony for a
trumpet player.

Bobby claps his hands...until Willard stares him down.

LILY (CONT'D)
And you've made such tremendous
progress on that horn of yours
since January.

WILLARD
She's right, Thelma.

CARRIE
(strolls over to Thelma)
We'd be honored and delighted if
you'd become the Lincoln Women's
Symphony's newest trumpeter.

Thelma looks lost.

BOBBY
You'll be puttin' that chair in
good hands.

PATRICE
You deserve it, Thel!

Other students AD LIB their encouragement.

LILY
(holds Thelma's hands)
Any time you get stuck, we'll be
glad to work with you. Anita and
Grace Anne are great with that.

A slow smile crosses Thelma's face.

THELMA
I...accept...your invitation!

Thelma, Lily, and Carrie make it a group hug as Willard and
his orchestra's remaining members cheer.

INT. LINCOLN HIGH SCHOOL THEATER - DAY

The school's own orchestra wraps up a spirited rehearsal...a session that brings a smile to Edgar's face.

EDGAR

Very, very good! Now that's the way
our philharmonic should sound!

Beatrice, Caroline, Esther, Helen, and Lillian lead the musicians in AD LIBBED cheering.

EDGAR (CONT'D)

Now...if this weren't the last
rehearsal of the year...

Beatrice and a few others crack up in laughs.

EDGAR (CONT'D)

Any of you fine musicians got any
questions before we wrap it up?

Dead silence...for a few moments. Then Helen raises her hand.

EDGAR (CONT'D)

Yes, Helen?

HELEN

To tell you truthfully, Mr.
Stockwell...this has to do with the
Lincoln Women's Symphony Orchestra.

Some musicians groan while Edgar nods oh-so-slowly.

HELEN (CONT'D)

Three positions have opened up--

LILLIAN

Two, Helen.

Helen's mouth hangs open.

LILLIAN (CONT'D)

My brother told me they found a
trumpet player yesterday.

Esther claps her hands.

ESTHER

So that means we need...the LWSO
needs a bassist and a clarinetist.

Most eyes in the theater turn to Caroline.

EDGAR

Caroline...you've got my blessing.

CAROLINE

I don't know if I can fit in Ida
Mae's shoes...

HELEN

Who can?

CAROLINE

Well, then...I'll certainly give it
my very best.

Edgar leads the throng in applause!

ESTHER

Now...how many of you in here play
the clarinet?

Beatrice and THREE BOYS raise their hands.

HELEN

You boys go ahead and put your
hands down.

Laughter fills the theater as the boys lower their hands.

BEATRICE

Not only do I play clarinet...I
also play flute, uke, and piano.

LILLIAN

Don't forget the violin, Beatrice.

BEATRICE

Lillian, as long as I can toot that
licorice stick someplace, I'll
forget the fiddle in a minute.

Esther and Helen stroll to center stage.

HELEN

Mr. Stockwell, I hope it's okay.

EDGAR

It's okay.

ESTHER

Beatrice...Caroline...come up here.

Caroline and Beatrice make their way to center stage...and
gain hearty applause.

HELEN

Here's what you two newcomers are gonna do...

Helen, Esther, Caroline, and Beatrice huddle up...Edgar tries to sneak a peek.

EXT. MUSIC STORE - DAY

Rochelle lugs Ida Mae's broken bass into a downtown store.

INT. MUSIC STORE SALESFLOOR - DAY

The trumpeter gazes out at a salesfloor where pianos (mostly uprights and spinets) dominate the scene.

She makes a beeline for the counter, where BERT MCDEVITT (late 20s) checks his paperwork.

BERT

(looking up from books)
Good morning! How may I help you?

ROCHELLE

I'd like to get my bass repaired.

Rochelle heaves the instrument onto the counter.

BERT

What happened?

ROCHELLE

I got mad one day...

BERT

And you took it out on your bass.

Bert gathers the bass' parts together and sets the broken instrument behind the counter.

ROCHELLE

Actually...it's not my bass.

BERT

I didn't think you played bass. I remember you from high school...you played a mean trumpet. And guitar. You still do.

Rochelle's nod is slow.

BERT (CONT'D)
I went to the Lincoln Theater last month and saw the Lincoln Women's Symphony Orchestra. Saw you play.

ROCHELLE
Uh...huh...

BERT
I recognize that bass fiddle you brought in.
(points at broken bass)
That was Ida Mae Ard's bass.

ROCHELLE
Yes...it was.

Bert watches A FEW PEOPLE enter the store.

BERT
Be right with you folks!
(to Rochelle)
I remember your folks...and they would've had a problem with Ida Mae playing in the orchestra, too.

ROCHELLE
Wait a minute...I just wanna get this bass fixed...

BERT
Ida Mae was one of the reasons that concert was successful.

Rochelle grits her teeth.

BERT (CONT'D)
That's what a lot of my customers told me...and they heard about what happened at that Omaha station.

ROCHELLE
I need to make it up to her...ain't there any way to fix Ida Mae's bass fiddle...at all?

BERT
It's a total loss...

Bert steps away from the counter.

BERT (CONT'D)
 Rochelle...how would you feel if
 somebody else broke your trumpet?

Along the way, he watches a stunned Rochelle stagger out of the store.

INT. UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA COM DINING ROOM - DAY

Carrie, Jimmy, Joe, Paul, and the twenty holdover LWSO musicians gab with Beatrice, Thelma, and Caroline.

Everybody wears summer clothes.

LULA MAE
 Beatrice...Caroline...Thelma...we
 welcome you to the Lincoln Women's
 Symphony Orchestra.

CONSTANCE
 (to the newcomers)
 We're so glad you're here.

Handshakes abound between the newcomers and the holdovers.

THELMA
 Thank you...thank you so much.

Caroline and Beatrice shake their heads "yes."

EILEEN
 You'll find that our motto is:
 "We're all in this together." Good
 ol' all for one, one for all.

Thelma beams.

JANE
 We're the Twenty-Three Musketeers.

Laughs break out all over the place.

CARRIE
 While the subject's still fresh in
 my mind...anybody got any
 alternatives to us trying to get on
 the radio?

KATHARINE
 Sure! Why not another concert?

Katharine's suggestion gains AD LIBBED agreement.

PAUL
 (to Carrie)
 As much as you like the outdoors...

CARRIE
 Well, honey...you do, too.

PAUL
 Why don't you give an outdoor
 concert?

Orchestra members eyeball each other...then Paul and Carrie.

CARRIE
 As long as it's in a place where
 the people in the seats are too far
 away to throw cigarettes at us, I'm
 all for it.

BEATRICE
 Well...so much for Antelope Park.

While some players look confused, Lily perks up.

BEATRICE (CONT'D)
 First, it's too small.

CHLOE
 Funny...I never realized that.

BEATRICE
 Second, the bandstand's too small.

Lily wags a happy finger at Beatrice.

LILY
 I really love how you think.

CAROLINE
 That's Beatrice Anna Maria
 Angelini, all right.

Laughs fill the dining room.

SAME SCENE - A BIT LATER

The orchestra's seventeen adults, four teenagers, and two
 little girls sit or stand in the orchestra setup.

Carrie jogs to the podium.

CORINNE

Beatrice...Caroline...Thelma...now
that you're officially with us,
let's break the ice and find out
how all of us sound together.

CARRIE

Corinne...you took the words out of
my mouth. And I'm glad you did.

CAROLINE

Carrie...what are we gonna play?

CARRIE

Let's break the ice by doing a
nonclassical piece.

Jane and Beatrice applaud...Eileen catches the clapping.

EILEEN

Whatcha got in mind?

Beatrice and Jane shrug.

THELMA

Anybody know "Baby Face?"

Surprise grips the gang...for a few moments.

JERRINE

Thelma, I love that song!

ANITA

Me, too!

SAME SCENE - MINUTES LATER

Trumpeters Anita and Thelma, trombonists Grace Anne and Lula Mae, tuba player Olive, clarinetists Beatrice and Nannette, and flutists Constance and Corinne blow out scales.

Aida (on bassoon) and Edythe (on oboe) join in a bit later.

Claudia (at the 1910s upright) and Eileen (at the 1900s upright) stroke out arpeggios...Jerrine abandons her harp to play arpeggios on the conservatory's 1880s upright.

Chloe bats out scales on the marimba...Jane pounds out drum fills on the tympani while Katharine and Jeanne do the same on the two drum sets.

Cellist June and bassist Caroline join violinists Esther, Helen, and Lily in a spirited tune-up.

Joe, Jimmy, and Paul watch in real anticipation from that nearby table.

A more-than-fired-up Carrie readies the LWSO.

CARRIE

One...two...one, two, three, four.

Chloe handles the intro all by herself...then she and her orchestra mates roar into a semiimprovised "Baby Face."

Nannette steals a glance at Beatrice...Anita sneaks a peek at Thelma...Eileen gives Caroline a sideways look.

And Carrie breaks out in a huge smile.

EXT. MARY'S AND ROCHELLE'S HOUSE - DAY

This smallish, homely-looking house stands mere blocks away from Lincoln High School.

INT. MARY'S AND ROCHELLE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Rochelle and maternal grandmother MARY STOUGHTON (80) sit in chairs around a small table on which a radio BLASTS OUT a music show.

MARY

Rochelle, you should be back at that music buildin' on campus and showin' everybody who the real trumpet talent is.

ROCHELLE

I can't, Grandma! Not 'til I make it up to Ida Mae.

Mary bristles.

ROCHELLE (CONT'D)

And Kitty.

MARY

You tryin' to kill me?

ROCHELLE

And I've gotta apologize to the whole LWSO.

MARY

You don't have to apologize to nobody! You got that?

Rochelle watches Mary shut the radio OFF.

ROCHELLE
I've gotta do it!

MARY
I can just hear my DAR buddies now.

ROCHELLE
It's the only way I'll be able to
get back in the LWSO.
(turns radio back ON)
Carrie said so!

Mary attempts to lunge out of her seat...

MARY
You don't owe nobody
nothin'...'specially that spook!

...only to sit right back down.

MARY (CONT'D)
Now you know them coons don't
appreciate no classical music!

ROCHELLE
(shakes her head "no")
I broke her bass! And she really
loves classical music!

MARY
Listen, Rochelle! Listen to me:
That little spade didn't belong in
no symphony orchestra!

Mary clicks the radio OFF again.

ROCHELLE
The guy at the music store thought
she did belong!

Rochelle turns the box back ON...and changes the station to
one airing a nonmusic program.

ROCHELLE (CONT'D)
And then he asked me: "How would
you feel if somebody else broke
your trumpet?"

MARY
I know what your daddy woulda done.

ROCHELLE
Daddy didn't play a trumpet.

Mary shuts the radio OFF; Rochelle jumps from her seat...

ROCHELLE (CONT'D)
His favorite instrument was the
radio...and the Victrola was a
close second.

...and leaves the room.

EXT. LINCOLN CITY HALL - DAY

It's a four-story Gothic Revival brick building downtown.

INT. LINCOLN CITY HALL OFFICE - DAY

Carrie and Paul saunter into the office of FRANKLIN W. FOSNES
(40s)...who sits, feet propped up, at his desk.

Franklin jumps out of his seat and stands at attention once
Paul and Carrie locate a pair of chairs across from the desk.

FRANKLIN
Franklin W. Fosnes...Lincoln Parks
and Recreation Department.

Franklin shakes hands with Carrie, then with Paul.

CARRIE
Hi, Mr. Fosnes. I'm Carrie--

FRANKLIN
I know who you are. Have a seat.

The two men and the sole woman sit down.

PAUL
Uh, Mr. Fosnes...I'm her husband.
Paul Knight.

Franklin nods at Paul.

FRANKLIN
(zeroing in on Carrie)
So...you're the one...you're the
schoolteacher who started her own
women's symphony orchestra.

CARRIE
Yes, I am.

FRANKLIN

You let her do this, Mr. Knight?

Two incredulous looks greet Franklin.

PAUL

Uh...I didn't think it was a question of one person letting another do anything.

Now Franklin grits his teeth.

PAUL (CONT'D)

I mean...I support Carrie leading the Lincoln Women's Symphony.

CARRIE

Just as I support Paul working at that furniture store downtown.

Paul gives Franklin a "take that!" kind of nod.

CARRIE (CONT'D)

Anyway, Mr. Fosnes, I called about renting Pioneers Park for a summer LWSO concert.

Franklin laughs himself silly...

PAUL

She's telling you the truth!

...only to come away with a deer-in-the-headlights stare.

CARRIE

(stares Franklin down)

I just thought it'd be a great thing to do for the City of Lincoln...a city I've lived in ever since I was six. My parents and I moved here from Wayne, Nebraska.

PAUL

Yeah. I mean, Carrie used to go to Antelope Park and watch the Lincoln Municipal Band...and from that, she first decided to be a conductor.

Franklin fidgets with a pencil.

FRANKLIN

You let her do this, Mr. Knight?

Paul grits his teeth...Carrie blows an imaginary bubble.

CARRIE

Mr. Fosnes...if the all-male
Lincoln Symphony Orchestra came to
you for this kind of request, you'd
fill it faster than you can say
"Dust Bowl!"

Franklin drops his pencil...and slumps in his chair.

INT. UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA COM DINING ROOM - DAY

Carrie and her Lincoln Women's Symphony Orchestra members
finish up "Afro-American Symphony," by William Grant Still.

Jimmy, Joe, Muriel, Paul, and Thelma's parents WELDON and
LAVINIA JAMES (both 40s) applaud from seats at the table.

Chloe, Eileen, Esther, Helen, Jane, and Thelma look
ecstatic...several other performers look stunned.

WELDON

Great job!

LAVINIA

Really proud of you, Thelma! And
the whole orchestra!

Thelma waves back at Lavinia and Weldon.

MURIEL

Carrie, that's an interesting
selection. Never heard it before.

Aida gazes at Carrie.

AIDA

Where will we play this piece?

ANITA

And live to tell about it?

CARRIE

I read where the Chicago Symphony
played this a couple of years ago.

AD LIBBED reactions pour out of some LWSO members' mouths.

CARRIE (CONT'D)

But we'll be playing it here in
Lincoln...Lincoln, Nebraska!

JEANNE

Where at here in Lincoln?

Carrie's grin evolves into a huge smile.

CARRIE

We're playing Pioneers Park...on
Sunday, August fourth, at three
o'clock PM!

Jubilation breaks out at the table...twenty-two musicians
cheer themselves hoarse while Beatrice looks baffled.

BEATRICE

1935?

CARRIE

Yes, 1935!

GRACE ANNE

The same 1935 we're living in right
now, Beatrice!

Now Beatrice joins in the celebration...and Eileen jumps up
from her seat at the 1900-09 upright piano.

EILEEN

In that case...tell all your
friends, everybody!

LULA MAE

And I'd like to tell some of my
enemies, too!

Lula Mae's remark intensifies the cheering.

INT. CARRIE'S AND PAUL'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The Two Knights stuff flyers into envelopes.

Each flyer reads: "FREE OUTDOOR CONCERT!" In smaller letters:
"SUNDAY, AUGUST 4, 1935, 3:00 PM, PIONEERS PARK." Still
smaller letters say: "SUPPORT THE LWSO! BRING YOUR PALS!"

EXT. SERVICE STATION - DAY

Chloe (in her overalls) fills the fuel tank of a 1930 Chevy.
She collects the money from THE DRIVER...who, in turn,
receives a concert flyer from a stack near the pumps.

INT. ARD'S BARBER SHOP - DAY

June tapes a flyer onto the front window during a business lull...then she, Ida Mae, and Raymond make it a group hug.

INT. GOOCH CAFETERIA - DAY

Constance finds a bulletin board...and attaches a concert flyer to it.

INT. GOOCH PRODUCTION FLOOR - DAY

Olive sticks a concert flyer on a nearby bulletin board.

She walks off...and Jeanne fastens another concert flyer to the same bulletin board.

INT. GROCERY STORE SALESFLOOR - DAY

Corinne stretches over the fruits-and-veggies display to place an LWSO concert flyer on the front window.

EXT. DOWNTOWN POST OFFICE - DAY

Carrie, Esther, Helen, Lavinia, Leo, Lily, Mabel, Muriel, Paul, Thelma, and Weldon stand in line to stuff bags of envelopes into mailboxes.

INT. WALDBAUM'S CLOTHING SALESFLOOR - DAY

Aida affixes a flyer to the front window...then turns around to see Kitty and Solomon behind her. Next: Group Hug Time!

EXT. O STREET - DAY

Eileen fastens concert flyers to streetlight poles.

EXT. UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA CITY CAMPUS PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Anita, Beatrice, Caroline, Edythe, Grace Anne, Jane, Jimmy, Katharine, and Nannette place a flyer on each car they find.

INT. JERRINE'S AND JOE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Patrice plays a piece from her piano exercise book...and turns the page to find a copy of the LWSO flyer.

She turns around...and eyeballs a smiling threesome: Gwendolyn, Jerrine, and Joe.

EXT. M STREET METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH - DAY

Claudia and Lula Mae open the front doors and tape a concert flyer apiece to the inside...then run like you know what.

INT. MUSIC STORE SALESFLOOR - DAY

Rochelle (in her food server uniform) strolls inside with a large canvas bag.

BERT

(looks up from counter)

Hi, Rochelle...how may I help you?

She sets the bag on the counter...and extracts from the sack a large jar filled with coins and dollar bills.

ROCHELLE

If it's all right, Bert...I'd like to start a Lincoln Women's Symphony fund...so that customers can donate if they want to.

Bert looks stunned...

ROCHELLE (CONT'D)

It's the least I can do to help.

...then excited.

EXT. IDA MAE'S AND RAYMOND'S HOUSE - DAY

A smallish, tidy-looking abode near NU's City Campus.

INT. IDA MAE'S AND RAYMOND'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Ida Mae, Kitty, Raymond, and Solomon play dominoes at a card table in this sparsely-furnished space.

KITTY

Ida Mae and Raymond, we wanna thank you for inviting us over.

RAYMOND

Kitty, you know you and Solomon are always welcome here.

IDA MAE

That's the truth!

Ida Mae adds a domino or two to the pile in the middle.

IDA MAE (CONT'D)
 Matter of fact...in honor of you
 both coming to visit...

RAYMOND
 We baked a cake!

SOLOMON
 Now you're talking!

Kitty takes her turn...and puts a domino into the collection.

SOLOMON (CONT'D)
 Did you bake it from scratch...or
 from one of those newfangled mixes?

KITTY
 Solomon...it's a cake.

Raymond studies hard before he antes up.

When he adds a domino or two, he and his colleagues find A
 KNOCK on the front door.

IDA MAE
 (rises from table)
 It's okay. I've got it.

Ida Mae opens the front door...and finds Carrie and Paul.

IDA MAE (CONT'D)
 Oh, my gosh! Come on in!

The bass-playing barber gestures the Two Knights inside.

SOLOMON
 Carrie...Paul...do you both play
 dominoes?

CARRIE
 No...it's all right.

Paul shakes his head sideways.

Before Ida Mae can close the door, Eileen enters the house.

IDA MAE
 Eileen...come on in! So glad to see
 you this afternoon!

Raymond leaves the table to offer Carrie, Eileen, and Paul a
 place to sit...but they shake their heads "no."

Ida Mae tries to close the door...but Lily, Jeanne, Olive, Claudia, Helen, Esther, Katharine, Jerrine, Joe, Grace Anne, Jimmy, Chloe, Anita, Aida, June, Corinne, and Jane file in.

Then Constance, Beatrice, Nannette, Thelma, Caroline, Lula Mae, Edythe, and (of all people) Rochelle enter the area.

Last one to enter closes the door.

Nobody now sits in the newly-cramped space.

Rochelle snakes her way toward Kitty and Ida Mae.

CORINNE

It's all right, Kitty and Ida Mae.

ROCHELLE

I've done a lot of thinking these last six weeks...and...Ida Mae...Kitty...I've treated both of you terrible.

Several heads nod.

ROCHELLE (CONT'D)

I was brought up to hate people on account of their skin color or on account of their religion.

Edythe tries to speak...only to bite her lips.

ROCHELLE (CONT'D)

I had no business rejecting people who've already been rejected...and I humbly apologize to both of you.

Ida Mae and Kitty eye each other. Then they study Rochelle.

ROCHELLE (CONT'D)

Please...please come back to the orchestra.

ANOTHER KNOCK on the door...the closest person to the door lets Bert (brand-new double bass and all) in.

ROCHELLE (CONT'D)

You both more than belong.

A stunned Ida Mae bursts into big tears...Rochelle does, too.

Kitty breathes hard before she, Rochelle, and Ida Mae make it a group hug.

KITTY

Of course we'll come back.

The threesome break the hug...Ida Mae nods.

ROCHELLE

And I apologize to all of you...and I'll try my best...my very best to be a better orchestra member.

CARRIE

That's good enough for me.

LWSO tears turn into cheers as Bert gestures Ida Mae toward the new bass.

EXT. PIONEERS PARK - DAY

Theodore, Stanley, and Sara (along with A DOZEN OTHER M STREET CHURCH MEMBERS) stroll with picnic items in tow.

Everybody wears casual clothes on this scorching August day.

THEODORE

I still think about the day we canceled what would've been the LWSO's first concert.

As the worshipers walk toward a picnic area, they pass by Jeanne, Leo, Lily, and Mabel...who toss a baseball around.

STANLEY

Theodore, don't start that again.

THEODORE

Let's face it: We turned our backs on people who needed us. We snubbed people who were playing for pride.

SARA

Oh, come on, Theodore! That orchestra's a dirty rotten joke!

THEODORE

Sara...we weren't very Christian to people who wanted to put Lincoln on the map.

Lavinia, Rochelle, Thelma, and Weldon sit at a picnic table.

WELDON

Lavinia, it's okay.

LAVINIA
All right, Weldon. I'll listen.

ROCHELLE
Mrs. James...your blood coulda
saved my mama's life.

All three Jameses nod.

ROCHELLE (CONT'D)
I'm so sorry Mama chose not to
accept your offer.

LAVINIA
(holds Rochelle's hands)
Rochelle...it's all in the past.
All we can do is deal with
today...and make it better.

A slight grin crosses Rochelle's face.

LAVINIA (CONT'D)
We can't erase our parents'
mistakes...but we can learn to
avoid making the same mistakes.

ROCHELLE
Thanks...I'll remember that.

THELMA
I'm ready to show 'em we can really
play. How about you, Rochelle?

ROCHELLE
Let's do it, Thelma!

The fired-up foursome jump up from the table.

SAME SCENE - AN HOUR LATER

Carrie conducts as Corinne stands out front and...plays her
bagpipes while the LWSO's remaining twenty-five musicians
back her up on Ludwig van Beethoven's "Ode to Joy."

An area east of the playground serves as the orchestra
pit...and A LARGE CROWD (many on folding chairs, some on
trunks, others seated on the ground) enjoys the music.

Louis sits in the front row of spectators...and looks pleased
as A FILM CREW shoots footage of the concert.

In the middle of the crowd, Franklin bites his lips.

In the back, Carter and Flournoy flank Walt, who rests his hand over his heart (an act that surprises his two buddies).

WALT

It's bagpipes. They're patriotic.

CARTER

Don't forget about your arthritis.

SAME SCENE - A BIT LATER

Cellists Jane and June team with violinists Lily, Helen, and Esther and bassists Ida Mae and Caroline to deliver a retooled version of Teresa Carreno's "Serenade for String Orchestra." In this one, horns, winds, and drums help out.

Spectators Solomon, Raymond, Muriel, Mabel, Leo, Bert, and Albert look some kind of proud.

SAME SCENE - MINUTES LATER

The three old upright pianos from the NU Conservatory of Music (hammers exposed on all three) take the spotlight in "Gottschalk Waltz."

Claudia (playing the 1880s piano), Eileen (1900s), and Jerrine (1910s) leave Patrice, Joe, and Gwendolyn spellbound.

GWENDOLYN

Teresa Carreno...Eileen's idol...wrote this when she was ten.

PATRICE

She did, Mama?

JOE

Ten what, Gwendolyn?

SAME SCENE - STILL LATER

Trombonists Grace Anne and Lula Mae and trumpeters Anita, Rochelle, and Thelma join with tuba-playing Olive for the first four bars of "Afro-American Symphony."

Audience members Paul and Jimmy look ecstatic...Theodore nods in contentment...Sara and Stanley sit there openmouthed.

STANLEY

That's a symphony? "Afro-American Symphony?"

THEODORE

That's what Mrs. Knight said.

Before the fourth bar ends, Jerrine (now on harp) jumps in...as do string musicians Caroline, Esther, Helen, Ida Mae, June, and Lily.

On Bar Number Five, Edythe (on oboe), Aida (on bassoon), Jane (now on tympani), Chloe (on marimba), and Jeanne and Katharine (both on drum sets) enter the piece...as do clarinetists Beatrice, Kitty, and Nannette.

It isn't long before flutists Constance and Corinne and pianists Eileen (1880s upright) and Claudia (1900s upright) play their way in for a bit of "call and response" riffing.

Out in the crowd, Willard and Edgar take note...and Douglas, Bobby, Lavinia, Lillian, Warner, Weldon, and Whitney go wild.

SAME SCENE - EVEN LATER

The thirteen Lincoln Women's Symphony members who play three or more instruments take over at the would-be orchestra pit.

In "Five Foot Two, Eyes of Blue," Kitty plays the 1880s piano, Grace Anne the 1900s one, and Edythe the 1910s upright...while Nannette and Ida Mae strum guitars.

Claudia pounds the drums, Jane and Beatrice pluck away on banjos, Katharine plays ukelele, Jerrine saws away on violin, Chloe and Lula Mae toot flutes, and Corinne plays cello.

In the back of the crowd, Velma and Bud look proud, Weston looks amazed...and Lyle stands stupefied.

VELMA

Bud...you wanna dance?

BUD

Is FDR in the White House?

Bud and Velma back up a taste before they cut a rug.

SAME SCENE - LATER YET

With the full orchestra back in the pit, "Largo," from "New World Symphony," takes the concert down the home stretch.

Corinne and Constance add their flute work to Caroline's, Ida Mae's, June's, Esther's, Helen's, and Lily's string work to lead the way out of the piece.

Jerrine's harp arpeggio sets up Lily's unaccompanied twenty-seven-bar passage.

The applause kicks in...Carrie and her musicians bow and bow...the handclapping heats up until the seated spectators grow it into a standing ovation.

Carrie steps up to a center mike to address the crowd.

CARRIE

Thank you, everybody, for coming out and supporting the Lincoln Women's Symphony Orchestra! We had some fun today, didn't we?

The cheering becomes pandemonium!

Orchestra members wave to the audience when Weston, Theodore, Stanley, Sara, Lyle, Louis, and Franklin step toward Carrie.

THEODORE

Mrs. Knight, have you got a minute?

CARRIE

Sure.

Members pack up their instruments when Joe finds Jerrine...Raymond approaches Ida Mae...Solomon strides over to Kitty...all three couples kiss.

THEODORE

All of us up here owe you apologies...for underestimating you and the LWSO.

STANLEY

(eyeballing Carrie)
And women musicians in general.

Paul jogs over to Carrie...they both embrace and kiss.

Jimmy and Grace Anne watch Carrie and Paul...the two younger lovers break into their own kiss-filled embrace.

FRANKLIN

Congratulations, Mrs. Knight. You and the Lincoln Women's Symphony Orchestra pulled it off.

CARRIE

Thanks...and we couldn't have done it without everybody who came out here to support us.

FRANKLIN

You made Lincoln proud.

Carrie and Paul lock lips again.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)
Whaddya say about holding another
one of these here next August?

CARRIE
As long as it's all right with the
orchestra members...we can do it!

Franklin claps as Eileen approaches Paul and Carrie.

EILEEN
Carrie...thank you for doing this.

CARRIE
No problem at all, Eileen...I know
your husband and son are smiling
down from Heaven...

EILEEN
Well...I thought they were doing
the fox trot from Heaven.

Laughter breaks out among some apologists.

WESTON
Speaking of fox trot...we at WAAW
would still like to put the LWSO on
the air.

LYLE
And you ain't gotta get rid of
nobody to be on my program!

CARRIE
It's a deal!

Carrie, Lyle, Paul, and Weston shake hands.

SARA
Carrie...Stanley, Theodore, and I
helped bring the Lincoln Symphony
to our church back in 1927.

STANLEY
And we welcomed them with open
arms...but we refused to do the
same for the LWSO.

Constance, Jerrine, and Lily come over to the confab.

SARA

My husband and I were still angry
at our daughter for packing up for
New York City to go to Juilliard
and eventually auditioning for Phil
Spitalny's All-Girl Orchestra.

Lily spots Edgar and Willard...the two men wave at her and
receive her "thumbs up" before Lily and Carrie shake hands.

STANLEY

We failed to see her dedication.
And we failed to see your
dedication, too. There's nothing
silly about what you're doing.

CONSTANCE

Thank you, Mr. Patterson!

STANLEY

You're welcome, Miss Lomb!

Now all the remaining LWSO members join with Jimmy, Joe,
Raymond, and Solomon to congregate around Paul, Lily,
Jerrine, Eileen, Constance, and Carrie.

THEODORE

Can you bring the LWSO to our
church this coming October? All
twenty-six members?

CARRIE

You bet.

LOUIS

(points to Jerrine)
Mildred...you got a minute?

Confusion grips some confab faces.

JERRINE

(to orchestra mates)
That's just a stage name they gave
me back in Hollywood.

Some musicians nod in understanding.

JERRINE (CONT'D)

Louis...what can I do for you?

LOUIS
We've got another screen test for
you. Would you like to come back to
Hollywood and test again?

Jerrine receives stares from people around her.

JERRINE
Sure, I'd love to come back.

Carrie does a doubletake...Anita and Katharine grit their
teeth...Esther throws her hands up...Helen sighs.

JERRINE (CONT'D)
But only if the rest of the Lincoln
Women's Symphony can come along
with me! And do screen tests, too!

Cheers erupt all over the park!

Louis shakes his head "yes" in agreement, then shakes
Jerrine's hand.

FREEZE FRAME as he and Carrie engage in a handshake.

FADE OUT.

THE END