

"BLEEDING GUMS"

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1-5-2020

FADE IN:

EXT. ST. CECILIA CATHEDRAL, OMAHA, NE - NIGHT

This imposing, ragtime-era icon of Spanish Colonial Revival architecture shines...especially on this night in late May.

INT. ST. CECILIA SANCTUARY - NIGHT

It's Duchesne Academy's graduation ceremony!

NOT A SINGLE SPACE IN ANY PEW IS EMPTY.

In this enormous-yet-sheltering space, NINETY (OR SO) 17-TO-18-YEAR-OLD GIRLS in white caps and white gowns make the sanctuary shine with their presence in the front pews.

So do FAMILY MEMBERS and FRIENDS...as well as FACULTY. Casually dressed or not, everybody looks colorful.

MARY ANN KIEFER (54, witty, by-the-book; Duchesne's head of school) and SANDRA POLTL (54, spontaneous; the school's principal) stand by an altar topped with diplomas.

MARY ANN
Hallie Elizabeth Zerbrugg.

HALLIE ZERBRUGG (17) strides toward the altar, shakes Mary Ann's hand, and receives a diploma and a handshake from Sandra.

Hallie's all smiles as she heads back to the front pews.

SANDRA
Jenna Marie Zheng.

JENNA ZHENG (18) struts her way to the altar, where Sandra shakes Jenna's hand and Mary Ann gives that diploma and a handshake to Jenna.

As Jenna walks back to her seat, she gives a "thumbs up."

MARY ANN
Tamara Sue Zimmermann.

TAMARA SUE ZIMMERMANN (18) walks to the altar under gales of laughter...because the back of her gown features a sign that reads: "KICK ME."

Tamara Sue and Mary Ann shake hands before the former receives a diploma and a handshake from Sandra.

The laughter dies and Tamara Sue starts for her seat when:

SANDRA

Tamara Sue...you've got something
on the back of your gown.

Now Tamara Sue stops in her tracks, grabs for the back of her gown, and removes the sign from it before she sits back down.

The sanctuary erupts in guffaws again when Tamara Sue holds up the "KICK ME" sign for all to see.

SAME SCENE - MINUTES LATER

The packed house is abuzz while Mary Ann stands at a lectern.

MARY ANN

Ladies and gentlemen...it IS my
pleasure to introduce the Duchesne
Academy Class of 2020!

The packed house erupts in tremendous applause.

MAIN TITLES APPEAR OVER ACTION.

In the organ loft, a seated ISABELLA VICTORIA "BELLA"
CLAUSSEN (16, dedicated) applauds, too.

When the handclapping ends, Bella faces the keys of the church's famous three-manual pipe organ and plays a lively recessional in which the grads leave the sanctuary...and trigger more applause.

INT. DINING ROOM AT PARISH CENTER - NIGHT

That festive atmosphere continues strong as graduates, parents, friends, and faculty alike sit or stand and drink punch and/or eat snacks.

AD LIBBED conversation fills the air.

BARBARA MIKOLAJCZYK (58, passionate, flamboyant; strong Texas accent) and husband GREG (58, laid-back, fun-loving) engage in some of it with Mary Ann and her hubby TYSON "TY" KIEFER (63) when Tamara Sue approaches the group.

BARBARA

Tamara Sue...tear 'em up when
you're at Boston College, y'hear?

TAMARA SUE

I will, Mrs. Mikolajczyk...but
first, I wanna tear up whoever put
that sign on my back!

As Tamara Sue walks away, Greg turns to Mary Ann.

GREG

Wasn't she the one who tried to start a wrestling club at the school?

MARY ANN

Yep...one of a kind.

TY

Now, Mary Ann, you know that's what the school's all about: Freedom to be--

Barbara spots Bella and gestures her into joining the throng.

BARBARA

Hey, Bella...great job tonight of mashin' those keys!

Mary Ann's, Greg's, and Bella's mouths hang open.

BELLA

Mashing?

BARBARA

That's exactly what you did. Both the piano and the organ.

BELLA

In that case, well...thanks, Mrs. Mikolajczyk.

Sandra and MARILYN MONROE MCCUTCHEON (39, nurturing, outgoing; sexy) stop by and pat Bella on the back.

BARBARA

After all, Bella, they don't call you "The Keyboard Kid" for nothin'.

BELLA

Well...I do try to do my best.

MARILYN

(to Bella)

And we really appreciate it...and that's why we entrusted you with providing the music for this year's commencement.

Bella's face shows a wide smile.

BELLA

I must admit, Ms. McCutcheon, I was a bit nervous. After all, not everybody gets to play one of the world's most famous organs...and it's right here in our backyard.

TY

Hey, everybody, I'm gonna grab some more snacks. Can I get you anything?

Barbara, Bella, Marilyn, Mary Ann, and Sandra shake their heads "no."

GREG

Ty, we're good.

Ty exits for the treats while Barbara turns to Bella.

BARBARA

Speakin' of good...how do you feel about playin' jazz?

Bella stares in space...and everybody else in the group stares at Barbara.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

Bella...thank about it over the summer.

BELLA

(heading off)

I will!

SANDRA

Barbara, are you on that kick again?

BARBARA

Doggone right Ah am! Ah mean, this is the year that Duchesne gits its first jazz band...and Ah can prove it! Ah sent a bunch of--

MARY ANN

Now, Barbara, you know that we would've already had a jazz band at Duchesne had enough students approached Ms. McCutcheon or her predecessor about that.

BARBARA

Yeah, Mary Ann...but you keep sayin' "no."

Ty comes back to the throng. Along the way, he eats snacks.

SANDRA

(to Barbara)

A student's gotta ask a teacher.
Not the other way around.
(puts arm around Barbara)
Now you know better than that.

MARY ANN

And above all, Barbara: Can we really afford a jazz band?

Barbara looks to Marilyn for support...but gets a shrug.

EXT. MIKOLAJCZYKS' HOUSE - DAY

This one's a smallish house in a greenery-filled neighborhood in Central Omaha. In the driveway: Greg's 2014 Ford Fusion and Barbara's 2018 Dodge Charger. (Her car's license plates say: "BAD BARB.")

INT. MIKOLAJCZYKS' LIVING ROOM - DAY

In this heavily-furnished space, Barbara and Greg, TV trays in front of them, sit on the sofa. Envelopes and letters fill the trays, while a laptop sits on Barbara's lap.

Greg stuffs a letter into an envelope and turns to Barbara.

GREG

I got to thinking about what Mary Ann said last night.

Barbara turns her laptop on.

BARBARA

Greg...Duchesne Academy of the Sacred Heart can afford to have a jazz band.

With a few mouse clicks, Barbara produces an already-signed online petition. While she scrolls down, Barbara shows the laptop's screen to Greg.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

Ah got a thousand signatures...not just from students.

Greg slowly nods as he seals that envelope.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
Parents, too. And some business
leaders who've been contributin' to
the--

GREG
You gonna hit them up for the
money, Barbara?

BARBARA
Nonsense, honey. Ah've still got me
a 401(k)--

GREG
You mean our 401(k).

BARBARA
Ah'm not talkin' 'bout our joint
401(k). Ah ain't touchin' that.

Barbara produces a flash drive from her jeans pocket (or
shirt pocket) and sticks the drive into her laptop.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
'Member when we came here from
Texas, we went to work for Enron
before they moved outa here?

Greg grabs another letter and stuffs it into an envelope. He
seals the envelope.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
Just before Kenneth Lay and Jeffrey
Skillin' ran off with all the rank-
and-file employees' 401(k)
accounts, Ah took a hundred bucks
out of mah own 401(k).

GREG
And you didn't even tell me.

Some more mouse clicks enable Barbara to save the petition to
that flash drive.

BARBARA
And Ah decided to turn that old
401(k) from Enron into a mad money
account.

A satisfied Barbara yanks the flash drive out of the laptop
and shuts the computer off.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
 Ah'm gonna fund Duchesne's new jazz
 band with mah mad money
 account...you'd be surprised how
 much that thang's grown since 2001.

Greg grabs another envelope and another letter.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
 Four years before Ah started
 teachin' at Duchesne.

GREG
 And you didn't even tell me.

Barbara stuffs the flash drive back in her pocket.

BARBARA
 That's because Ah come from
 Garland, Texas...right outa Dallas.

Greg stares at Barbara while he seals the envelope.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
 And you come outa Abilene, Texas.

GREG
 Wanna help me seal up these
 letters, baby?

BARBARA
 Baby? Ah've got four days on you!

Barbara grabs some envelopes and letters.

EXT. DUCHESNE ACADEMY - DAY

This three-story, World War 1-era landmark in Omaha's Midtown
 section features a circle drive at the front entrance.

On this early August day, A FEW PEOPLE stroll by the school.

INT. DUCHESNE CAFETERIA - DAY

Mary Ann, Sandra, Barbara, Marilyn, and FORTY (OR SO) OTHER
 FACULTY MEMBERS (each one a lay person) fill this large,
 earth-toned space.

Everybody sits at a row or two of tables toward the front;
 most teachers and administrators eat snacks and drink
 coffee/tea/water/juice/pop.

MARY ANN
 We've got five days left to go
 before the first day of school, and
 I know you're fired up.

Mary Ann receives an array of reactions from her cohorts.

MARY ANN (CONT'D)
 Let's make this the best school
 year Duchesne's ever had!

Cheers...applause...jubilation.

SANDRA
 Anybody got any questions before we
 wrap it up today?

Teachers eyeball each other for a few seconds...until Barbara
 stands up.

BARBARA
 Not a question, Sandra...but an
 exclamation.

Some instructors' mouths fly open.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
 This is the year that Duchesne
 finally gits its first jazz band.

Most of the teachers and Sandra groan.

One of the groaning faculty members, BILLY CURRIVAN (40s),
 stands up and stares at Barbara.

BILLY
 Don't tell me you're on that kick
 again!

SANDRA
 (to Billy)
 For the sixth straight year.

BARBARA
 And the sixth time is the charm,
 'cause seven of our incomin'
 freshmen have committed to helpin'
 git this band off the ground.

While the groaning continues, Barbara goes to a plastic
 storage bin on another table.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

(opens storage bin)

A few months ago, Ah sent out an online petition to see how our Duchesne community felt about our school havin' a jazz band.

Barbara takes out enough copies of that petition for each of her colleagues. She walks around the tables and gives a copy of the document to each faculty member.

ANNE MARIE PIKIELL (60s; last name rhymes with "Michael") looks at her copy, then turns to Barbara.

ANNE MARIE

Barbara...aren't you happy being a math teacher?

Barbara nods enthusiastically.

ANNE MARIE (CONT'D)

May I remind you that you and I are the only two female math teachers in this academy? Out of five math teachers--

BARBARA

Yeah, but some of y'all in this room double as coaches...especially you, Billy! You're a science teacher and the head volleyball coach--

BILLY

Well, that's different!

JARROD ATCHLEY (late 50s, good-looking) sets his petition copy on the table and gives Billy a "thumbs up."

JARROD

You've gotta admit, Barbara, Billy's one of the reasons our volleyball team's one of the best in the state.

BARBARA

Speakin' of best, Jarrod...we can have the best darned jazz band in the State of Nebraska, too!

MARY ANN

Where's the money gonna come from?

BARBARA

Ah'll git to that later, Mary Ann.
 (stops in her tracks)
 Look here, y'all: Marian's got a
 concert band and an orchestra.
 Mercy High's got a pep band.

Barbara resumes her walk around the tables (as well as her distribution of the petition).

BARBARA (CONT'D)

Up in Seattle, there's an all-
 girls' high school called Holy
 Names Academy...and they've got
 themselves a jazz band.
 (zeroes in on Marilyn)
 Tail me...what have we got?

MARILYN

Well...uh...we've got an
 outstanding string ensemble...

Most faculty members erupt in pandemonium.

BARBARA

Look, y'all: We've got the best all-
 girls' high school in the whole
 darned state! By far! And there
 ain't one sangle reason we cain't
 have our own jazz band, too!

MARY ANN

(throws her hands up)
 All right, Barbara Ellen Carnrick
 Mikolajczyk! Go ahead and start up
 that jazz band!

Barbara and a reluctant Mary Ann trade high fives.

MARY ANN (CONT'D)

Just show me where the money's
 gonna come from.

LORRIANNE KEIM (40s) points at Barbara and Mary Ann.

LORRIANNE

Yeah...so I can go home and watch
 "Dr. Phil!"

Some of Lorrianne's fellow teachers laugh.

EXT. MUSIC STORE - DAY

SOME PEOPLE file inside this generic, freestanding building on the city's main east-west drag, Dodge Street.

INT. MUSIC STORE SALESFLOOR - DAY

Barbara looks for sheet music and music books when a clerk named SHELBY (a woman in her 40s) approaches her.

SHELBY
Anything I can help you find?

BARBARA
Absolutely! Ah'll take all the school band books you've got!

Shelby nods.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
We're startin' a jazz band at Duchesne Academy--

SHELBY
Are you pulling my leg?

BARBARA
If Ah am, then a catfish doesn't have bones.

Barbara finds the music she's after.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
Anyway...our school was the first one in the Omaha Metro to give each student an ahPad. Back in 2002.

Shelby and Barbara head toward the counter.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
So there's no reason in the world why our school cain't have a jazz band.

SHELBY
(ringing up purchases)
Duchesne Academy with a jazz band...what's next? Nebraska becoming a purple state?

Barbara shows a slight grin.

EXT. DRUMSVILLE - DAY

It's a store located in a busy medium-sized shopping center in Omaha's Millard section.

INT. DRUMSVILLE SALESFLOOR - DAY

Drums dominate the floor, all right...and guitars and basses have their own wall, while keyboards take up another and brasses and woodwinds still another.

Barbara fondles a trombone while KIMIKO UMEKI (a clerk in her 20s) approaches her.

KIMIKO

Well, I'll be a...Barbara
Mikolajczyk! Are you still teaching
algebra at Duchesne Academy?

BARBARA

Ah sure am.

Barbara sets the trombone down and shakes Kimiko's hand.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

Nice to see you again, Kimiko.

KIMIKO

Thanks...but...you were holding a
trombone.

BARBARA

That's because we're startin' up a
jazz band over there.

KIMIKO

Is Mrs. Seavey still there?

BARBARA

If she were, Ah wouldn't even be in
this store shoppin' for band
instruments.

Barbara pulls a list out of her jeans pocket and hands the list to Kimiko.

KIMIKO

(checking Barbara's list)
Three trumpets...three
trombones...a tenor sax...an alto
sax...a baritone sax...two
guitars...looks like you want the
works.

Barbara nods.

KIMIKO (CONT'D)
Don't you need a drum set?

BARBARA
We've got one already. And that's only because when Mrs. Seavey retired and Ms. McCutcheon came in, first thang Ms. McCutcheon did was form a world drummin' club.

Kimiko's nod is a wary one.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
Don'tcha worry 'bout a thang, Kimiko. Ah played trombone from middle school to college. And Ah majored in both music and math at the University of North Texas.

While Kimiko goes back to the list, Barbara picks that trombone back up and blows notes...and draws attention from SOME CUSTOMERS.

EXT. JANOUSEKS' HOUSE - DAY

This is a larger house in an upscale part of the Elkhorn section of town.

Barbara's muscle car is parked on the street.

INT. JANOUSEKS' LIVING ROOM - DAY

Greg and Barbara walk inside a spacious, well-furnished room when DEAN and SHERRYLL JANOUSEK (both 50s) meet them.

DEAN
You must be the couple that texted us about the old piano we're trying to give away.

GREG
Well, actually, Dean...my wife Barbara did all the texting.

A nodding Barbara shakes Sherryll's and Dean's hands.

BARBARA
Y'all know how much Ah love old pianos.

GREG

That's why we never had one in our house...old or new.

Sherryll and Barbara chuckle.

BARBARA

And besides, Greg and Ah could never git our three kids to play...so it's just as wail.

The two couples walk toward an 1880-1899 upright piano (its lid is closed) as the conversation continues.

SHERRYLL

Our two kids used to take lessons...but they, well, they gave up.

(to Barbara)

Open it up.

Barbara removes the piano's music rack and sets it aside, sits on the piano's bench, lifts the fallboard, and finds...lots of well-worn keys.

Nonetheless, she plays scales that morph into a bluesy, jazzy set of riffs.

And the piano's tinny sound perks up Dean's, Greg's, and Sherryll's ears.

DEAN

Sherryll, Barbara knows what she's doing.

Greg and Sherryll shake their heads "yes."

BARBARA

Y'all wait 'til this thang goes into the music room at Duchesne Academy.

Sherryll and Dean look mortified as Greg grins.

EXT. GORDON ENNIS' HOUSE - DAY

A modest-looking house in the north part of town.

INT. GORDON ENNIS' BASEMENT - DAY

Barbara, Greg, and GORDON ENNIS (60s, Black) congregate around a 1950-1979 Hammond B-3 or similar electric organ in this cluttered space.

GORDON
(to Barbara)
My niece went to Duchesne...and she
had you for her algebra teacher.
She said you were a hoot. Best
teacher she ever had there.

BARBARA
Hey, thank you kindly, Gordon.

Greg, Barbara, and Gordon trade high fives.

GREG
(to Gordon)
What's she doing with all that
knowledge now?

GORDON
Well, she's using it as the owner
and the head chef at a restaurant
in Detroit.

Barbara and Greg eyeball each other in puzzlement.

GORDON (CONT'D)
And Barbara...she also picked up
your Texas accent.

Barbara's mouth flies open.

BARBARA
Let's...uh...check out this organ
of yours.

Duchesne's algebra teacher finds the organ unplugged...so she
sticks the cord into the nearest outlet she can find.

Then she turns the organ on...and gets nothing.

GORDON
All it needs is a fuse.

Now Greg's mouth hangs open as Gordon shrugs.

BARBARA
No problem a tall.

Barbara breaks out her cell phone.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
Just gonna see what that home
improvement store at Seventy-Second
and Ames has for fuses.

Greg turns to Gordon.

GREG

What can you say when you marry a
better do-it-yourselfer than you
are?

EXT. DUCHESNE ACADEMY - DAY

A full instrument case in each hand, Barbara directs TWO MOVERS (a man in his 30s and a woman in her 20s) as they lug that Nineteenth-Century upright piano toward the school's Performing Arts Center entrance.

SAME SCENE - A BIT LATER

Barbara helps the two movers haul Gordon's old electric organ through the same entrance.

SAME SCENE - STILL LATER

The two movers bring in an instrument case apiece...while Barbara totes a bass fiddle in its case.

INT. DUCHESNE MUSIC ROOM - DAY

In a medium-sized, earth-toned space where the old upright and the not-as-old organ join an ornate grand piano, Barbara and the two movers recline on a riser.

BARBARA

(handing Mover #1 a check)
Thanks so much, y'all.

MOVER #1

You're welcome.

MOVER #2

Barbara, I hope you don't mind my asking, but...

BARBARA

Ask away!

MOVER #2

Are you having a midlife crisis?

BARBARA

Have they stopped barbecuin' in Texas?

Grins form on the movers' faces.

EXT. DUCHESNE ACADEMY - DAY

A new school year chimes in as SOME STUDENTS in the academy's red-and-black-themed uniforms stroll toward the school's front entrance.

INT. DUCHESNE MUSIC ROOM - DAY

Trumpets, trombones, saxophones, electric guitars, and an electric bass recline on stands; the bass fiddle and a couple of amps are on the floor...as an ecstatic Barbara puts Duchesne's drum set together.

She checks her watch and finds it's 6:59 AM.

Barbara opens the music room's door...and AALIYAH CLAYTON (14, spirited, Black; cute) bursts through and heads right for the 1880-1899 upright.

Aaliyah stops in her tracks and runs up to Barbara.

AALIYAH
Hi, Mrs. Mikolajczyk.
(extends hand to Barbara)
I'm Aaliyah Clayton.

Barbara and Aaliyah shake hands.

AALIYAH (CONT'D)
And I just love to tickle those
ivories.

BARBARA
Ah know you do, Aaliyah. Ah went
online and read your Classical Kids
profile. We're so glad to have you.

Aaliyah does a doubletake.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
Welcome to Duchesne Academy...and
welcome to our new jazz band.

AALIYAH
(heading for old upright)
Thanks, Mrs. Mikolajczyk!

An eager Aaliyah pounds out "After Hours" or something just as bluesy.

After a few seconds, Barbara strolls over to the old-fashioned upright to watch Aaliyah play...when Bella leads MELODY ROSE CHEN (14, philosophical) into the room.

BELLA

Melody Rose, you're gonna like Mrs.
Mikolajczyk.

Melody Rose spots the bass fiddle and stands it up while
Bella reaches the grand piano.

MELODY ROSE

I think I do already!

Bella and Melody Rose listen hard to Aaliyah's playing...and
the former two jump in once they look ready to back Aaliyah.

ELIZABETH MARIE "LIZZY" KURTZMANN (14, analytical; wears
glasses) totes a full trumpet case as she walks through the
door. She spots the two pianists.

LIZZY

Hey, I think I know this one!

BARBARA

Awraht, Lizzy...let's hear whatcha
got!

As Lizzy takes her trumpet out of her case and joins in,
JESSICA ANNE FIATOA (15, jovial) carries a full tenor sax
case as she walks through the door.

When Jessica Anne takes out her tenor sax and plays along,
Barbara goes to the drums to pound away.

Barbara and the five girls develop a real groove when Mary
Ann enters the room, flings the door shut, and...after a few
tries, waves the musicians into silence.

JESSICA ANNE

Mrs. Kiefer...

Barbara sets the drumsticks aside and approaches Mary Ann.
Both women walk to another side of the room as the five
students look on.

MARY ANN

What happened to the spinet that
was in here?

BARBARA

It's now in the chapel.

MARY ANN

You promised us seven freshmen. I only see three, a sophomore, and a junior. Where are the other four miracle workers?

BARBARA

Ah don't know, Mary Ann. Maybe they got themselves lost. This is now a sprawlin' campus, anyway. We just tacked on a--

MARY ANN

All I know is: You haven't got a jazz band. You've got Maroon 5!

Mary Ann strides away from Barbara and toward Aaliyah, Bella, Jessica Anne, Lizzy, and Melody Rose.

MARY ANN (CONT'D)

(gesturing)

Everybody...go home! Come back by eight forty-five...in time for convocation!

Five young mouths fly open.

LIZZY

But I live in Papillion, Mrs. Kiefer. By the time I catch the next bus going down there and--

MARY ANN

Then go over to the chapel...you've got a whole lot of praying to do, anyway.

Mary Ann heads for the door and gestures the five young musicians into following her.

Lizzy and Jessica Anne pack up their horns, Mary Ann opens the door, and...ELEVEN STUDENTS stampede their way into the music room.

A shocked Mary Ann moves out the way...and Barbara breathes a sigh of relief.

MARY ANN (CONT'D)

All the best to you...sixteen students...and Mrs. Mikolajczyk...as you all embark on this...jazz band journey.

Jessica Anne and Lizzy unpack their horns amid tremendous jubilation from fellow students and Barbara.

While Mary Ann slithers out the door and closes it behind herself, NINA SANDOVAL (14, quiet) and ELLE REAGAN (15, diligent) team up with Barbara to arrange a dozen chairs and a dozen music stands into a big-band setup.

AALIYAH

Bella...how do you feel about calling the tune?

BELLA

Uh...okay.

Bella takes to the old upright and Aaliyah goes to the grand; the former bangs out a classical number...and, a few bars later, turns the piece into a bouncy jazz tune.

When Melody Rose goes back to the bass fiddle to add a bottom to the music, Bella's twin sisters OLIVIA CLAUSSEN (15, compliant) and HANNAH CLAUSSEN (15, questioning) grab a trumpet each. Olivia toots away.

Hannah shakes her head "no" and gives the trumpet in her hands to JANIE CHONG (16, friendly).

JANIE

Thanks!

HANNAH

You're welcome, Janie!

Hannah goes to the drums as Janie and Lizzy join in on their trumpets. After a second, LAKEISHA TURNER (14, Black, down-to-Earth; wears glasses) and ELIZABETH ANN "LIBBY" FRENCH (14, White, confident) plug electric guitars into amps and strum.

With chairs and music stands in place, Nina picks out an alto sax, Jessica Anne plays her tenor sax, and BRIDGET HANRAHAN (15, Marine-tough) runs toward the baritone sax.

BRIDGET

(hoisting baritone sax)

Mine!

Nina and Bridget toot away, Aaliyah's piano playing enters the tune, and Elle and LAURA WONG (14, cheerful) eyeball each other.

ELLE

I've always wanted to play
trombone...but I let too many other
people talk me out of it.

LAURA

Now's your chance to prove 'em
wrong.

Elle picks up a trombone while Laura goes to the electric organ. While the former takes a cautious approach to her playing, the latter has a ball at the console.

Barbara flashes a huge smile...and EVELYN SKRADIS (15, playful; cute) shrugs at best buddy SAMANTHA BIRDWELL (15, whimsical).

EVELYN

(pointing at the pianists)
There goes my instrument.

Evelyn heads for the door...but Samantha gestures her into staying put while Barbara approaches the twosome.

And the music continues strong.

BARBARA

Evelyn, don't leave...we've got
somethin' for you and Samantha.

SAMANTHA

(to Evelyn)
See what I mean?

BARBARA

Ah know you two are excellent
sangers.

SAMANTHA

Well...thank you, Mrs. M.

BARBARA

Stay right there, you two.

Samantha and Evelyn nod, and Barbara grabs two trombones. She gives one to Evelyn and the other to Samantha.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

Try it on for size...see how you
like it.

EVELYN

Thanks! We will!

Bella stops pounding the ivories, then gestures her thirteen playing colleagues into silence.

BELLA

Hannah...let's see if that world
drumming class has paid off for
you.

Several students cheer an openmouthed Hannah on.

HANNAH

Okay! I'll do it!

As the other teenagers and Barbara watch, Hannah launches a drum solo.

Several bars into Hannah's solo, Olivia points to Elle, Evelyn, and Samantha.

OLIVIA

Let's hear how you three sound.

Nina's face shows a "that isn't fair" look.

Samantha and Evelyn join Elle in that get-to-know-your-trombone approach to playing.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

And whatever you trombonists come
up with, we'll work around it.

Some students nod; others look confused.

LAKEISHA

(to Olivia)

Okay...but let's please figure it
out first.

Barbara looks some kind of pleased as some of Lakeisha's colleagues AD LIB their agreement.

EXT. MIKOLAJCZYKS' HOUSE - NIGHT

Barbara's and Greg's cars rest in the driveway.

INT. MIKOLAJCZYKS' DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Barbara and Greg sit at the table in a space that's about as heavily furnished as the living room.

It's dinner time, and the fare features barbecue ribs from a chain restaurant.

GREG
(points at barbecue ribs)
Honey, I got you your favorite.

BARBARA
Thanks a bunch, dear. And Ah got
you your favorite, too.

Greg and Barbara flash smiles as the couple help themselves to the ribs and all the fixin's.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
It's in the fridge.

GREG
Chocolate cheesecake?

BARBARA
Do cows moo?

GREG
(taking a bite)
Thanks a million!

Barbara chows down as if she's got no tomorrow.

GREG (CONT'D)
Hey, uh...how'd your day go?

BARBARA
You first.

GREG
Terence "Bud" Crawford brought his
car to our shop and got some new
tires put on it.

An openmouthed Barbara drops her fork.

GREG (CONT'D)
The WBO welterweight champion.

BARBARA
Wail...that blows mah day outa the
ol' Missouri River.

It's high fives for Barbara and Greg.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
What's Terence Crawford really
like? Up close and personal?

GREG

Barb, I'll tell you...but first,
you gotta tell me how that first
day with Duchesne's jazz band went.

Barbara sips from her water/juice/pop/milk/wine glass.

BARBARA

Hey, it went great.

Now Greg drinks from his own water/juice/pop/milk/wine glass.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

We've got five...six girls who
really know their stuff...and the
others aren't too far behind. Ah'm
really gonna love workin' with
them.

(takes a bite)

All sixteen of 'em.

Greg and Barbara raise their glasses in jubilation.

GREG

To Duchesne Academy's new jazz
band.

BARBARA

And to your tar store at Twenty-
Fourth and Harney.

The twosome click their glasses before sipping away.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

Now...what's Terence "Bud" Crawford
really like?

Greg takes another swig.

INT. DUCHESNE MUSIC ROOM - DAY

Photos now adorn the room's walls...photo after photo of
women jazz instrumentalists from Lovie Austin to Valaida Snow
to Marian McPartland to Melba Liston to Terri Lyne Carrington
to Esperanza Spalding.

Other pictures depict all-female jazz-and-swing bands from
the Parisian Redheads to Ina Ray Hutton's Melodears to the
International Sweethearts of Rhythm to Maiden Voyage to Alice
in Dixieland to Sherrie Maricle's DIVA.

The chairs-and-music-stands setup remains intact.

All sixteen members of the school's jazz band sit down, and Barbara passes a folder of sheet music to each member.

BARBARA

Awraht, y'all...now we're gonna see
what we can do when we've got sheet
music to work with.

As they look over their sheet music, some students look bewildered...while a few others look surprised.

Bella, Lizzy, Aaliyah, Jessica Anne, Melody Rose, and Laura all look confident.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

How many of you bandmembers have
heard of the Girls Ellin'ton
Project?

Laura, Lizzy, and Nina raise their hands.

NINA

I found out about 'em online.

LIZZY

(nodding at Nina)
Yeah. They're out of Seattle.

BARBARA

That's right, Nina and Lizzy...and,
if thangs work out, we're gonna go
out there for sprang break.

Most of the band cheers.

Hannah looks puzzled, though.

HANNAH

But that's during Seattle's cold-
and-wet season. Why can't we go
someplace fun...like Los Angeles?

BARBARA

Hannah, it gits cold, wet, and
cloudy durin' that same time in
Kearney, Nebraska, too.

A grin breaks out on Barbara's face.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

But if we all play our cards right,
we'll be headin' to Kearney this
April twenty-third and twenty-
fourth for the Nebraska State Jazz
Festival.

While their bandmates cheer away, Libby joins Hannah in the
Puzzled Club.

LIBBY

That's when our Field Day takes
place, doesn't it?

Bridget and Janie nod at Libby.

BARBARA

That's right, Libby...but if we all
make the grade as a band, we can
have ourselves quite a field day
over in Kearney this April. Right?

As Aaliyah and Laura lead the way, it's cheers all the way
around.

LIZZY

And another thing, you guys:
Sometimes, the Girls Ellington
Project rehearses at an all-girls'
high school called Holy Names
Academy...and Holy Names has a jazz
band, too.

Several heads nod.

LAURA

You know, Libby...and Lizzy...maybe
Duchesne and Holy Names can be
sister schools.

AALIYAH

Yeah...now that we've got a jazz
band here at Duchesne, too!

Libby slowly nods as her bandmates and Barbara jubilate.

BARBARA

Speakin' of jazz band...let's see
if we can wow our own school.

The sixteen young women grow attentive.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
 Y'all turn in your folders to the
 first tune we're gonna do...the
 first tune in your folders...

SAME SCENE - A BIT LATER

Bella plays the grand piano and Aaliyah tickles the ancient upright's ivories as Duchesne's jazz band does "Jazz Baby."

In the song's bump-and-grind, music-hall pace, Aaliyah, Bella, Bridget, Jessica Anne, Laura, Lizzy, and Melody Rose shine...while the other musicians struggle.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
 Git a li'l' more aggressive on
 those drums, Hannah!

While Hannah nods and puts across a stronger, louder beat, Barbara signals a surprised Janie into a trumpet solo.

Just as Janie takes the lead (and impresses), the door cracks open...and Billy and Jarrod catch a peek.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE THE MUSIC ROOM - DAY

Billy nudges the door shut before he turns to Jarrod.

BILLY
 Is "The Best Little Whorehouse in
 Texas" gonna be our school
 production this year?

Jarrod shakes his head "no."

BILLY (CONT'D)
 And what's Janie Chong...our best
 outside hitter...doing blowing a
 horn?

Jarrod and Billy stroll down the hall.

JARROD
 Billy...relax. Janie's just
 building up her resume, that's all.

Billy delivers a slow nod.

INT. DUCHESNE SECOND FLOOR CLASSROOM - DAY

Barbara, felt-tip pen in hand, stands at a whiteboard as she leads SIXTEEN STUDENTS in algebra class.

BARBARA

And remember, y'all: An algebraic expression is made up of numbers and variables together with at least one arithmetic operation.

Some of the teenagers nod.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

Now...can somebody tell me what a variable is?

Twin sisters TATUM and STOCKARD RADEMACHER (both 14) raise their hands.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

Awraht...Tatum.

TATUM

It's a letter that stands for an unspecified number.

BARBARA

Abso-freakin'-lutely right!

Barbara goes to the board and writes "8xZ-6."

BARBARA (CONT'D)

Most people use "X" for a variable...but when Ah was little, Ah learned "X" was the multiplication sign.

Some classmates nod at each other, then at Barbara.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

Now...some folks use a dot as the multiplication sign...ah, what the heck. Stockard, what number should we use for the "Z?"

STOCKARD

Sixteen.

Barbara scribbles out "Z=16."

BARBARA

Now that we know that "Z" equals sixteen...

As Barbara pens out "8x16-6," ARETHA ADAMS (14, Black) raises her hand.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
Yes...Aretha?

ARETHA
Speaking of sixteen, Mrs.
Mikolajczyk...I heard Mr. Atchley
and Mr. Curri van saw you in the
music room with sixteen girls.

Aretha's remark touches off AD LIBBED reactions from other
class members.

BARBARA
(writing "128-6")
Wail, they're fine ones to
talk...with their double-dippin'
selves.

And the class breaks out in student laughter.

MONTAGE SEQUENCE

INT. DUCHESNE MUSIC ROOM - DAY

Laura and Lakeisha remove the Nineteenth-Century upright's
music rack and measure the rack.

INT. DUCHESNE ART ROOM - DAY

The two jazz band members cut a piece of Plexiglas, then lay
the piece against the music rack.

INT. MIKOLAJCZYKS' LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The big-screen TV's ON...but Greg watches Barbara as she
studies music-education material.

The two lovebirds kiss.

INT. DUCHESNE MUSIC ROOM - DAY

Samantha, Evelyn, and Elle have the space to themselves; they
watch A VIDEO TUTORIAL in an effort to master all seven
trombone positions.

INT. DUCHESNE CAFETERIA - DAY

Guitarists Lakeisha and Libby work on riffs with bass
guitarist Melody Rose after the final bell RINGS.

INT. MIKOLAJCZYKS' DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Barbara juggles grading algebra students' papers with her remedial work on improving as a jazz band director.

INT. DUCHESNE SECOND FLOOR CLASSROOM - DAY

That algebra classroom becomes a theater as the jazz unit and its director watch A DOCUMENTARY about women in jazz.

When Sandra enters, Barbara gestures her into a seat.

EXT. MIDTOWN CROSSING SHOPPING CENTER - DAY

At the center's garden space, Janie, Lizzy, and Olivia practice their trumpet work...and receive money from SEVERAL GRATEFUL CUSTOMERS.

INT. DUCHESNE MUSIC ROOM - DAY

As bandmates and Barbara look, Lakeisha and Laura install that new Plexiglas music rack on the 1880-1899 piano.

END MONTAGE

EXT. DUCHESNE ACADEMY - DAY

A FEW STUDENTS sprint toward the front entrance.

INT. DUCHESNE MUSIC ROOM - DAY

Barbara guides the jazz band through an intense "Willow Weep for Me," in which Bella plays the grand piano, Laura's at the ancient upright, and Aaliyah works out on organ...while Melody Rose tugs the bass fiddle's strings.

It all ends when Bridget and her baritone sax moan out two final bars that lead to one closing, drawn-out note from the full band.

The band's got an audience: Marilyn, who's all smiles.

MARILYN
(applauding)
Great job! Great, great job!

Barbara and Co. jubilate.

JESSICA ANNE
Thanks, Ms. McCutcheon. Thanks for
sticking up for us.

MARILYN

Well...you truly deserve it.

Barbara gestures her appreciation.

SAMANTHA

And to think we've been together
only a month!

MELODY ROSE

Think of how much more we can do as
long as we stick together...

While most bandmembers AD LIB their agreement, Marilyn gazes
at the 1880-1899 upright, then at Barbara.

MARILYN

I see you fixed up "Methuselah."

Most of the throng looks confused.

MARILYN (CONT'D)

When I was a teenager growing up in
Southern California, I played on a
riverboat that had an old upright
piano like that...a "Methuselah."

AALIYAH

(to Marilyn)

That's really cool...you getting to
travel like that and play those
keys.

MARILYN

Well, actually, Aaliyah...the
riverboat was docked at Long Beach
Harbor.

A peeved Hannah stares at Laura, who gets off the Nineteenth-
Century upright's bench.

MARILYN (CONT'D)

It would've cost beaucoup bucks to
get that boat to sail again.

LAURA

Ms. McCutcheon...would you like to
take ol' "Methuselah" out for a
spin?

Marilyn stares in space while Barbara and some bandmembers
cheer the native Californian on.

MARILYN

Aw, what the heck...but first..
 (heads for old upright)
 I'd like to invite you jazz band
 members to play at our Christmas
 music program this December.

Sixteen young faces register shock.

BARBARA

Hey, y'all...this is our chance to
 show 'em that we really belong
 here! Whatcha say about that?

One by one, the shocked faces become jubilant ones.

BRIDGET

You heard Mrs. Mikolajczyk! Let's
 do it!

Bridget's remark brings tremendous applause.

Meanwhile, Marilyn sits at "Methuselah" and gives
 "California, Here I Come" the ragtime treatment.

Some of the teens gather around the old upright.

BELLA

Laura, if that old upright Ms.
 McCutcheon's playing is
 "Methuselah," what's our grand
 piano?

Laura strokes her own chin while Evelyn approaches her and
 turns to Bella.

EVELYN

Well...we can call it "Moses."

Bella and Laura stare at Evelyn.

EVELYN (CONT'D)

Well, look, you guys: That grand
 piano's long enough to part the Red
 Sea.

Marilyn continues to put on a show at the ancient upright.

INT. DUCHESNE GYM - DAY

THE ENTIRE PHYS ED CLASS plays volleyball. Aretha and
 Stockard play on one team; Libby and Tatum are members of the
 other squad.

It's fast and furious...and it all ends when Libby spikes the ball where the other team can't get to it.

The class ends when gym teacher AMY VAN AMERONGEN (40s) blows her whistle.

AMY
All right, that's it, class! Gimme
a lap around the gym!

Students break out in high fives and AD LIBBED congratulations before sprinting single file around the gym.

LIBBY
Hey, Aretha!

The girl in front of Libby stares at her for a moment while Amy blows her whistle again.

AMY
Run! Don't talk!

Now the sprint comes to an end...and, as the class heads for the showers, Libby seeks Aretha.

STOCKARD
You trying to get us in trouble,
Libby?

TATUM
Yeah, Libby! Are you trying to get
us in trouble?

Libby shakes her head "no," then turns to Aretha.

LIBBY
You were great out there.

ARETHA
Look who's talking!

Aretha and Libby slowly walk together.

ARETHA (CONT'D)
You know, Libby, you oughta go out
for basketball. I'm going out.

LIBBY
I think I can...I'm thinking about
it.

ARETHA
 You're...WHAT? After you tore
 everybody up last year in eighth
 grade?

LIBBY
 Well...I'm in our new jazz band.

Libby and Aretha stop in their tracks as fellow students head
 out of the gym.

ARETHA
 Libby, Libby, Libby...listen! Ain't
 no prestige in band! It ain't
 happening!

The twosome make it at last to...

INT. LOCKER ROOM - DAY

...where they head toward the showers and continue to gab.

ARETHA
 My uncle used to play jazz at that
 club in the Old Market downtown.

LIBBY
 You mean Ray Adams?

Aretha nods.

LIBBY (CONT'D)
 Aretha, your uncle was great!

Aretha's face shows a slight grin...for a few seconds.

ARETHA
 Thanks...but he had to put his horn
 away 'cause he developed a bad case
 of bleeding gums.

LIBBY
 That's really a shame. He was
 great.

ARETHA
 You wanna come down with bleeding
 gums, too?

LIBBY
 Aretha...I play guitar. And violin.
 And viola. And banjo. And I can--

ARETHA
 You wanna come down with
 bleeding...cuticles?

Libby and Aretha get in the showers.

EXT. MIKOLAJCZYKS' HOUSE - NIGHT

The house flashes some Halloween decorations now that the calendar's on the back end of October.

INT. MIKOLAJCZYKS' LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Barbara and Greg sit on the sofa; he watches her as she uses her laptop.

BARBARA
 Wail, Greg, that's it.

Greg looks at the image on the laptop's screen.

GREG
 So...you did it.

BARBARA
 Actually, the band did it.

Barbara digs her flash drive from her pants pocket and shoves the drive into the laptop.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
 Duchesne Academy's jazz band has
 just been entered in the upcomin'
 Nebraska State Jazz Festival.

With a few mouse clicks, Barbara saves the festival entry blank to the flash drive.

GREG
 Honey...that's not until April,
 ain't it?

BARBARA
 Yep...but those band spots fill up
 faster than hogs to a fountain o'
 slop.

Barbara yanks the flash drive out of the laptop.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
 And Ah had until next month to git
 Duchesne entered in the festival.

GREG

I just hope those sixteen girls are ready...and I hope you are, too.

Greg watches Barbara stick the flash drive back into her pants pocket.

BARBARA

Don't you worry, dear...just give us six months and those one hundred seventy-five bucks Ah just got through givin' the Nebraska State Bandmasters Association will pay off like a winnin' Powerball ticket.

And Barbara closes her laptop.

EXT. DUCHESNE ACADEMY - DAY

BUNDLED-UP STUDENTS head for the school on this chilly December day.

INT. DUCHESNE CHAPEL - DAY

It's not just an assembly...it's Duchesne's annual Christmas music program.

In this more-than-spacious facility, the whole faculty and THE ENTIRE STUDENT BODY get together for holiday melodies.

First up: DUCHESNE'S SACRE CHOIR (Aaliyah, Evelyn, Melody Rose, Samantha, and thirty-three other students), which delivers a sacred French carol while Marilyn directs and accompanies on the chapel's grand piano.

SAME SCENE - A BIT LATER

Samantha and Evelyn are two of the fifteen members of the school's ACAPELLA CHOIR; with Marilyn in front to conduct, the singers keep the sacred theme going with one of America's first Christmas carols.

When the song ends, Sandra and Mary Ann look proud...while some teachers dab moist eyes.

SAME SCENE - A BIT LATER

THE STRING ENSEMBLE (violinist Libby and three other girls) weigh in with a variation on another European carol.

In the pews, Aretha moves her index finger toward her open mouth...but A FELLOW STUDENT stares her down.

SAME SCENE - A BIT LATER

In the organ loft, TWELVE (OR SO) OTHER GIRLS ring handbells under Marilyn's direction.

SAME SCENE - A BIT LATER

EIGHT OTHER STUDENTS make up a small orchestral ensemble that plays a reverent version of something by, say, Andrae Crouch or Amy Grant.

SAME SCENE - A BIT LATER

At the chapel's Depression-era pipe organ, Bella fills the facility with a powerful rendition of a British carol.

Marilyn, Mary Ann, and Sandra lead the audience in applause that's stronger among the teachers than among the students.

MARILYN

(to the audience)

Thank you so very much. We appreciate that.

In back of Marilyn and around the altar, Barbara helps jazz band members arrange chairs, the drum set, and music stands.

MARILYN (CONT'D)

As you can see in front of you, we've started a new tradition here at the academy.

Mary Ann looks nervous while Sandra tries to calm her down.

MARILYN (CONT'D)

And it's only fitting that this new tradition should become part of our school's Christmas music program.

In the pews, Billy breathes heavily...and Jarrod and Amy (who flank Billy) work to subdue him.

AMY

Listen, Billy. Janie's gonna do fine.

JARROD

Amy's right. Let Janie keep building that resume of hers.

Billy's nod is slow and heavy.

MARILYN

So...students and
faculty...performing for the first
time anywhere...please welcome the
Duchesne Academy Jazz Band!

A smattering of applause grows stronger, more welcoming.

Melody Rose stands next to her bass fiddle as brass/reed
players Janie, Lizzy, Olivia, Bridget, Jessica Anne, Nina,
Elle, Evelyn, and Samantha sit with their instruments.

Aaliyah sits at the grand piano, Bella takes a seat at the
spinet piano that "Methuselah" replaced in the music room,
and Laura takes a seat at the electric organ from the music
room itself.

Lakeisha and Libby (both seated) plug their electric guitars
into amps.

At last, Hannah seats herself at the drum set.

A fired-up Barbara readies the band.

BARBARA

One...two...three...four...

HANNAH

I can't do this.

Hannah sprints toward the back of the chapel.

AALIYAH

Oh, yes you can, Hannah!

Bridget stands up and points toward the back of the chapel as
Hannah flings the door open.

Meanwhile, the audience is abuzz...with some students
laughing and some teachers in stunned silence.

BRIDGET

Hannah Claussen! Get back here
right now!

One by one, Hannah's bandmates sprint out of the chapel to go
after her.

Barbara tries to gesture the throng into some sort of calm.

BARBARA

Don't go away, y'all. We'll be
right back.

As Barbara leaves the chapel, Marilyn rests her chin in her hands...and Mary Ann gives those around her a smug look.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE THE CHAPEL - DAY

The Claussen sisters make it a group hug as their thirteen bandmates surround the threesome.

Barbara sprints toward the musicians and breathes relief.

BARBARA

Awraht, y'all...let's all git in a circle, take a deep breath, and hold hands.

The Duchesne Academy Jazz Band and its director hold hands, breathe deep, and form...well, it's not quite a circle.

LAKEISHA

It's more like an ellipse...but what the heck.

Some of the teenagers laugh.

BARBARA

Let's all close our ahs and pray.

Barbara and Co. shut their eyes and look upward or downward.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

Oh, Lord...please help these fine musicians do their thang and play to the best of their ability...and please let 'em have fun...in Jesus' name, amen.

FULL BAND, BARBARA

Amen.

BARBARA

Now...when Ah count to three, Ah want y'all to yell out "JAZZ BAND!" Got it?

FULL BAND

(but not in unison)

Yeah.

BARBARA

One...two...three...

FULL BAND, BARBARA

JAZZ BAND!!

Led by Barbara and Aaliyah, Duchesne's newest musical outfit whoops it up.

INT. DUCHESNE CHAPEL - DAY

With the bandmembers back in their places, Barbara leads the group through a rousing "Rockin' around the Christmas Tree."

The horn players drive a four-bar intro that leads to the Brenda Lee classic's basic melody, where Jessica Anne (on tenor) and Lizzy (on trumpet) lead the way for sixteen bars.

Bella's and Aaliyah's pianos prance (musically, that is) like reindeer, and Laura's chord-holding on organ provides a harmonic continuum.

Libby and Lakeisha wed their Motown-style guitar playing to Hannah's and Melody Rose's dead-on-the-beat drums-bass work.

The band's got something bouncy going.

Result: Sandra gives a shocked Mary Ann a confident look.

In the bridge, Lizzy solos the first four bars and Jessica Anne takes the next four before the whole band powers its way through another eight bars of basic melody.

Laura uses a glissando to launch her own eight-bar solo before Aaliyah and Bella team up to handle the next eight.

Under all that keyboard work, trombonists Samantha, Elle, and Evelyn work a "Hot Cross Buns" variation into the mix.

When the band moves back to the bridge, Lakeisha takes a four-bar solo that leads to Libby's own four-bar turn.

All that leads to Hannah's machine-gun-like, Memphis-flavored four-bar drum solo.

Billy looks pleasantly surprised...and draws approving looks from Amy and Jarrod.

Duchesne's jazz band puts most of the students on its side as it goes into "Rockin' around the Christmas Tree's" basic melody one more time.

Barbara's musicians stretch out the ending...one where the horns "call" and the rhythm section "responds."

Most of the students applaud while all the teachers and administrators do. In fact, Marilyn whoops it up before she hugs an elated Barbara.

Plus: Anne Marie and Lorrienne high-five each other.

LORRIANNE

You know, Anne Marie, that was a close call.

ANNE MARIE

Uh...how so, Lorrienne?

LORRIANNE

(gesturing)

I came this close to following Hannah out the door...and going home to watch "Dr. Phil."

Anne Marie wags a finger at Lorrienne.

INT. MIKOLAJCZYKS' LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Greg reads today's "Omaha World-Herald" and Barbara reviews her algebra students' homework online while the TV's ON in the background.

He sets the newspaper aside and eyeballs her.

GREG

Honey, you really had a ball yesterday. That band sounded great...in fact, everybody did.

Greg grabs the clicker and hits "MUTE."

GREG (CONT'D)

Glad they added a nighttime performance over in the chapel...and I'm glad you talked me into coming.

BARBARA

Ah'm glad, too.

Barbara and Greg lock lips for a few seconds.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

In fact, the band and Ah had more than a ball. We had a whole sportin' goods store.

Barbara shuts her laptop off and sets it aside.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
 It's gonna take somethin'
 monumental to blow this day outa
 the ol'--

A RINGTONE emanates from Barbara's pants pocket.

Barbara yanks her cell phone out of that pocket and puts the phone to her ear.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
 (into phone)
 Hi there. This is Barbara.

INT. OFFICE AT F STREET STEAKHOUSE - NIGHT

In a highly-cluttered space one step removed from cubicle status, CHUCK SORTINO (late 50s) relaxes at his desk while his cell phone's against his ear.

CHUCK
 Hi, Barbara Mikolajczyk. This is
 ol' Chuck from the F Street
 Steakhouse. How you doing?

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

BARBARA
 Ah'm feelin' like a billion-dollar
 oil well right now. How 'bout you?

CHUCK
 Well...this one's all about you. I
 went on YouTube today...and I
 watched a video that Marilyn Monroe
 McCutcheon put up on her channel.

BARBARA
 Wail, Ah'll be a...

CHUCK
 I didn't know Duchesne Academy of
 the Sacred Heart had a jazz band.

BARBARA
 We...finally got it off the ground
 four months ago. After six years of
 failure to launch.

CHUCK
 Yeah...you guys really pulled it
 off. You really turned that
 Christmas music program out.

CHUCK (CONT'D)

"Rockin' around the Christmas Tree," indeed! And in the chapel!

Greg leans toward Barbara.

CHUCK (CONT'D)

How'd you like to bring Duchesne's jazz band over to our steakhouse...so you can rock around our Christmas tree?

BARBARA

What date y'all got in mind?

CHUCK

We've got an opening just for you on December nineteenth. The Saturday before Christmas. Six PM.

BARBARA

Wail...

Greg gestures Barbara into a "yes."

BARBARA (CONT'D)

Chuck, December nineteenth oughta fit as snug as a Dallas Cowboy Cheerleader outfit on an reformed anorexic.

Chuck goes to a wall calendar to write under December 19:
"DUCHESNE JAZZ BAND- 6:00 PM."

CHUCK

Good! It's all settled!

BARBARA

Wait 'til Ah tail the band about this!

INT. DUCHESNE MUSIC ROOM - DAY

Jessica Anne, Melody Rose, Lizzy, and Bella (instruments in tow or nearby) watch Aaliyah dance around the room.

AALIYAH

(singing, too)

This love has taken its toll on me./He said "goodbye" too many times before./His heart is breaking in front of me,/And I have no choice--

Barbara enters the room.

Her mouth flies open.

Aaliyah's song-and-dance routine comes to a halt.

BARBARA

Where's the rest of the band?

LIZZY

That's what I'd like to know, Mrs. Mikolajczyk.

BARBARA

Didn't they remember this is a rehearsal day? It's seven o'clock AM, for cryin' out loud!

LIZZY

You'd think they'd remember...especially after we killed at both the afternoon and evening Christmas music programs.

Bella, Melody Rose, and Aaliyah nod at Lizzy.

MELODY ROSE

They remembered, all right, Lizzy. Maybe they didn't care.

BARBARA

Ah had some good news for the whole band...about a concert on December nineteenth.

Four sets of teenaged eyes light up.

Bella's don't.

BELLA

Maybe they were spooked about Hannah running out of the chapel...what if it happens again?

JESSICA ANNE

(to Barbara)

One thing's for sure: Aaliyah's really into Maroon 5.

Barbara's face shows a slight grin.

AALIYAH

Well, Mrs. Mikolajczyk, I figured:
"If we're ever down to five
members, and Mrs. Kiefer sees us,
I'd better develop some...moves
like Jagger!"

Aaliyah busts a move...but Lizzy stares her down.

BARBARA

We'd all better bust us some moves
like Jagger...and the other Rollin'
Stones.

Barbara gestures the five young stalwarts into joining her in
a huddle.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

Ah don't know how it'll all turn
out...but Ah want you five to talk
to the other eleven bandmembers.
Feel 'em out. See where they really
stand.

MELODY ROSE

You guys, it's worth a try.

BARBARA

You're tailin' the truth, Melody
Rose. We need to find out where
we're at on keepin' this band
alive.

AALIYAH

We'll do it!

Bella, Jessica Anne, Lizzy, and Melody Rose AD LIB their
agreement with Aaliyah.

BARBARA

Awraht, y'all...put your hands in
the middle.

The young musicians and Barbara put their hands in the middle
of the circle.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

After all, the F Street Steakhouse
hired us to play on December
nineteenth...not a bunch of drones.

Barbara receives five doubletakes.

INT. DUCHESNE CAFETERIA - DAY

At lunch, Lakeisha and Laura sit at a table in the middle, where they chow down in a room half full of STUDENTS.

LAKEISHA

Hey, Laura...did you hear about the forty-eight-thousand-dollar robot that bleeds and cries?

Laura draws a blank while she takes a bite.

LAKEISHA (CONT'D)

They're using it to train medical professionals.

LAURA

They got one at Nebraska Med yet, Lakeisha?

Aaliyah, tray full of today's lunch items, comes over to join Laura and Lakeisha. She sits at the nearest empty seat and eyeballs the twosome.

AALIYAH

Got what?

LAURA

Oh, hi, Aaliyah.

LAKEISHA

(waving at Aaliyah)

Hi...Laura and I were talking about this forty-eight-thousand-dollar robot that bleeds and cries.

AALIYAH

Yeah! He's called "Pediatric Hal." I found out about him online. He's supposedly five years old, and--

As the three freshmen gab, THREE OTHER STUDENTS rise from their table(s) to heckle Laura, Lakeisha, and Aaliyah with chicken sounds (or other heckling noises).

Aaliyah points at the three hecklers.

AALIYAH (CONT'D)

Next Wednesday morning! Seven o'clock! Bring your instruments to our next jazz band rehearsal!

The three hecklers gaze at each other, then at Aaliyah...only to scurry to their seats.

AALIYAH (CONT'D)
 (to the hecklers)
 DON'T HECKLE IF YOU CAN'T BACK IT
 UP!

Lakeisha and Laura nod in understanding at Aaliyah.

INT. DUCHESNE SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

Between classes, Melody Rose spots Elle and Nina, who walk several feet ahead of her as the hallway fills with ADDITIONAL STUDENTS.

Melody Rose worms her way toward the two fellow musicians.

MELODY ROSE
 Do you two have a minute?

Nina and Elle stop in their tracks.

NINA
 Is this about our missing band
 practice yesterday?

Melody Rose grins.

MELODY ROSE
 Actually, Nina, it's all about
 courage.

Elle, Melody Rose, and Nina walk down the hallway together.

MELODY ROSE (CONT'D)
 And you two have it in spades.

ELLE
 (shaking her head "no")
 Melody Rose, we've got nothing and
 you know it.

MELODY ROSE
 Wait a minute, Elle--

ELLE
 When your folks were in college
 back in China, they marched in the
 Tiananmen Square uprising back in
 1989. And they lived long enough to
 give birth to you.

Nina gazes at Melody Rose...and almost bumps into other Duchesne enrollees.

ELLE (CONT'D)

And they lived long enough to move here to the United States when you turned six...all the while with the Chinese government on your family's backs.

MELODY ROSE

Courage does come in all sizes.
(to Nina)

Your mom and dad came over here from Mexico because they wanted a better way of life...like any other immigrants all through history.

NINA

Well...you're right.

MELODY ROSE

And I like the fact that you keep fighting the people who want to send you to Mexico...in spite of the fact that you were born right here in the United States.

NINA

Thanks...I try my best.

ELLE

All right, Melody Rose: You say I'm courageous. You tell me how I'm so full of courage.

MELODY ROSE

Simple: By taking up the trombone, you're standing up to all those teachers and elders who had you playing violin and flute because they told you those were "girls' instruments."

Elle's mouth flies open as the threesome reach their destination(s).

MELODY ROSE (CONT'D)

You did say you'd always wanted to play the trombone...remember?

Now Elle freezes as she reaches the door to her next class.

EXT. CLAUSSENS' HOUSE - NIGHT

Here's a modern, modest-looking house in a neighborhood of similar residences...a Real Life version of "Leave It to Beaver's" Mayfield.

INT. CLAUSSENS' DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Bella, Hannah, Olivia, and parents DAVE and PATTI CLAUSSEN (both 40s) sit around the dinner table.

BELLA
 Olivia...Hannah...we really missed
 you at our last jazz band
 rehearsal.

Hannah starts a bowl of spaghetti around the table.

HANNAH
 Yeah, Bella. I get that.

Each Claussen spoons out spaghetti and puts it on their respective plate.

OLIVIA
 (staring at Bella)
 Do you have to keep bringing it up
 again?

Now Hannah starts a bowl of meatballs around that table.

DAVE
 You know, Hannah and Olivia, you
 two had your minds set on joining
 Duchesne's mock trial club next
 year.

As the Claussens load meatballs onto their plates, Olivia's and Hannah's eyes light up.

OLIVIA
 Yeah, Dad. Best in the state.

DAVE
 You two can forget about it.

Disgust crosses the twins' faces.

PATTI
 (to Hannah and Olivia)
 Don't you realize that you and
 Bella are pioneers?

BELLA
 Mom, that's what I tried to tell
 'em.

Bella grabs a can of grated cheese. She hands it to Hannah.

BELLA (CONT'D)
 Are you still ticked off because
 we're not going to Los Angeles for
 spring break?

Hannah just loads her spaghetti with the cheese.

PATTI
 Hannah...Olivia...your dad and I
 just about went broke buying you
 and Bella all those musical
 instruments and supplying you with
 all those lessons.

OLIVIA
 (to Hannah)
 You better not run us out of
 cheese!

PATTI
 I just thought you two would be
 proud of being two of the first
 members of Duchesne's jazz band.

Hannah hands the can of grated cheese to Olivia...who finds
 the can is empty.

PATTI (CONT'D)
 Bella's some kind of proud. She's
 willing to do anything she can--

HANNAH
 Mom!

Olivia slams the empty can to the table.

Four faces stare at Olivia.

DAVE
 You know...your mom and I were
 hoping you three daughters would
 eventually become a Twenty-First-
 Century version of Hanson.

BELLA
 Dad?

DAVE
 (singing)
*Mmmbop, ba duba dop./Ba du bop, ba
 duba dop.*

DAVE, PATTI
Ba du bop, ba duba dop./Ba du--

Regardless of what's left on their plates, Patti's and Dave's daughters leave the table.

EXT. BOWLING CENTER - DAY

A LARGE FAMILY files into this building on the east central part of town.

INT. LANES 15-20 - DAY

As BOWLERS compete in the flanking lanes, Jessica Anne, Bridget, Janie, and Libby seek to knock the pins in Lanes 17 and 18 down.

Jessica Anne's the next bowler when A VOICE bursts through the PA.

VOICE (O.S.) (FILTERED)
 Lanes seventeen and eighteen...your
 order's ready.

Libby and Janie leave their seats for the snack bar.

LIBBY
 Remember, Janie: You've got the
 tuna wrap and the chicken wrap's
 mine.

JANIE
 Got it! You're still in training!

Bridget watches Jessica Anne bowl.

BRIDGET
 Jessica Anne, your days as the
 Queen of the Lanes come to an end
 this afternoon.

JESSICA ANNE
 We shall see, Bridget.

Jessica Anne celebrates if she gets a strike or a spare. She gets seated when Bridget steps up to roll.

JESSICA ANNE (CONT'D)
All right...let's see if you can
back up your claim.

Bridget launches her (first) ball when Janie and Libby arrive
with two trays that hold the foursome's food and drinks.

JANIE
Jessica Anne, your chicken sandwich
combo's here. Bridget, your
cheeseburger combo's here, too.

Three colleagues eyeball Bridget as she celebrates her strike
(or rolls a second ball).

BRIDGET
Well...I can pig out now that
soccer season's over.

JESSICA ANNE
Go ahead and roll, Janie. Then I've
got a story to tell everybody.

Janie steps up to roll her (first) ball while Libby, Jessica
Anne, and Bridget chow down.

Janie high-fives her buddies if she strikes or spares her
frame.

JESSICA ANNE (CONT'D)
Hey, everybody...did I ever tell
you about my Aunt Vicki, who lives
in Honolulu?

Libby shakes her head "no" while she gets up to bowl.

JESSICA ANNE (CONT'D)
Anyway...back in the day, she
attended the University of Hawaii
at Manoa. She went there to study
architecture.

Libby grits her teeth if she can't strike out this frame (or
even earn a spare).

JESSICA ANNE (CONT'D)
After three years, Aunt Vicki
changed her major to urban and
regional planning...only to fall
nine credits short of graduation.

BRIDGET
 (to Jessica Anne)
 You're up.

JESSICA ANNE
 (getting up)
 I know.

Jessica Anne grabs her ball and throws her (initial) ball in this new frame.

JESSICA ANNE (CONT'D)
 She just didn't have the money. She had to work a bunch of odd jobs throughout the next couple of decades.

Jessica Anne celebrates success if she knocks all ten pins down in her frame.

JESSICA ANNE (CONT'D)
 But she raised the money, went back to Hawaii part-time...and she got her degree. Not once did she get down on herself. Not once did she feel like giving up.

When Jessica Anne sits back down, Bridget stands up, heads for the lane of action, and eyeballs Jessica Anne.

BRIDGET
 All right, Fiatoa, what are you trying to say?

JANIE
 Bridget, I get it.
 (to Jessica Anne)
 I'll see you at rehearsal next Wednesday.

Bridget rolls a gutter ball.

EXT. KURTZMANN'S HOUSE, PAPHOS, NE - DAY

It's a modern-looking suburban house protected by a few strategically-placed trees.

INT. LIZZY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Lizzy, Evelyn, and Samantha enjoy themselves (and a DVD MOVIE that's about to end) in a well-furnished, cozy space.

The three horn players munch snacks and drink pop/juice/water.

SAMANTHA

Great choice, Lizzy. I've always loved "The Runaways." It's my all-time favorite movie.

Lizzy smiles while Evelyn's mouth flies open.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

About women playing rock and roll.

EVELYN

That's more like it, Sam...the other day, you told me your all-time fave was "Green Book."

Samantha nods as Lizzy gets up to take one DVD out of the player and shove another in.

LIZZY

If you guys thought "The Runaways" was something, well, check this out.

As this NEW VIDEO (featuring women jazz instrumentalists) plays, Samantha and Evelyn look dumbfounded...while Lizzy's face shows pride.

LIZZY (CONT'D)

Everything on this video came off YouTube.

Evelyn points at the TV, then at Lizzy.

EVELYN

Lizzy...who's that playing on the video?

LIZZY

She's Gunhild Carling...one of the best jazz trombonists in the world today. She's been playing ever since she was little.

Lizzy and her guests look impressed as they continue to watch the video.

LIZZY (CONT'D)

Now...as you're watching this video, I'd like to ask you two a question.

Evelyn takes a good swig of her beverage.

SAMANTHA

Okay, Lizzy. Fire away.

LIZZY

When things started getting tough
for Gunhild in her trombone
studies, did she give up?

While Samantha wags a finger at Lizzy, Evelyn spits out what she's drinking.

INT. DUCHESNE MUSIC ROOM - DAY

The band's back at full strength...sixteen members strong!

Barbara and her student musicians finish up an uptempo "I Love You Truly." In this one, Evelyn plays the old-fashioned upright, Aaliyah plays guitar, and Libby plucks a banjo.

Lakeisha works out on soprano sax, Bridget toots a trombone, and Bella leads the way on vibraphone. The other ten bandmembers play their usual instruments.

When the tune ends, Barbara looks pleased...and the band whoops it up.

BARBARA

That's the way to do it, y'all!
That's what happens when all of us
work together!

Bridget wipes off the trombone's mouthpiece and hands the instrument back to Evelyn.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

Don't worry, Bridget...we'll git
you your own brass mouthpiece.

Evelyn goes back to the trombone section while a nodding Bridget moves over to the saxophone section, where she grabs her baritone.

JESSICA ANNE

(to Bridget)

You've really got something when
you can pick up almost any
instrument and jam with it within a
few minutes.

Jessica Anne and Bridget fist-bump each other.

BRIDGET

No hard feelings about you beating me in bowling.

Some musicians laugh...including Jessica Anne, who nods.

BARBARA

Speakin' of feelin's...Ah wanna know from all sixteen of you...

Some teenagers eyeball each other.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

We need to find out where we're at on keepin' this band alive.

Dead silence takes over as several students nod at Barbara.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

Any thoughts?

BELLA

Let's work the parochial schools.

Lizzy, Libby, Lakeisha, and Jessica Anne nod at Bella.

AALIYAH

Yeah, Bella! That!

BARBARA

Wail, Bella, you've got yourself a point. They say that you're better off bein' able to improvise by the time you're in eighth grade.

BELLA

And that's why we oughta talk to the eighth graders; get 'em interested in our band.

LAURA

You're right, Mrs. Mikolajczyk. It does make a world of difference.

Laura receives some AD LIBBED support.

BELLA

And when it becomes the younger girls' turn to go to Duchesne, more of 'em will want to go out for our jazz band.

BARBARA

Now that's what Ah'm talkin' about!

Bella soaks up the AD LIBBED kudos from her bandmates.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

So...Ah want y'all to go back to
your parishes and talk to your old
music teachers about our jazz
band...

While Aaliyah, Bella, Jessica Anne, Laura, Lizzy, and Melody Rose look fired up, their colleagues look stunned.

EXT. F STREET STEAKHOUSE - DAY

The parking lot that surrounds this modern-looking building is half full of cars.

INT. F STREET STEAKHOUSE DINING ROOM - DAY

Barbara, Dave, Greg, Patti, and Duchesne's jazz band (all tote instruments) arrive at a time where the dining room's halfway full of CUSTOMERS.

In a few seconds, Barbara walks over to CHUCK "CHIP" SORTINO JR. (37), who gabs with some eaters.

BARBARA

Hi, Chip. Where's your dad?

CHIP

Barbara, he's got the night off.
He's at home, getting ready to
watch the New Orleans Bowl.

BARBARA

We're supposed to play tonight. We
go up in forty-five minutes.

Chip looks lost.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

We're the jazz band from Duchesne
Academy.

CHIP

Yeah. Right.

Greg and some bandmembers join Chip and Barbara.

BARBARA

Your dad and Ah worked it out eleven days ago. Even signed a contract.

CHIP

Dad was joking with you.

GREG

I don't think so, Chip.

CHIP

Look, everybody knows Duchesne doesn't have a jazz band. Why would a girls' school have a jazz band? Next thing you'll tell me, they're getting ready to legalize pot here in Nebraska.

As Barbara pulls out a copy of the contract, Elle wags a finger at Chip.

ELLE

I happen to be in the band...me and those fifteen other girls here in the room.

AALIYAH

(to Chip)

We started up four months ago. And we've even got a video out.

LIZZY

And would you believe it's gone viral?

Barbara hands Chip that copy of the contract.

BARBARA

So, Chip, Ah'm callin' your dad.

Chip reluctantly reads the document while Patti and Dave join the throng.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

And if you don't fulfill your agreement and let us play here tonight, this restaurant's gonna be home to the biggest food fight in the history of the Omaha/Council Bluffs/Bellevue area!

PATTI
 (pointing at Chip)
 And we'll never eat here again!

DAVE
 How do you like them apples?

And Chip shrugs...while MORE BAND PARENTS enter the eatery.

SAME SCENE - A BIT LATER

The gig is on!

As Barbara readies the Duchesne jazz band on a makeshift stage, Marilyn, Sandra, Jarrod, and school executive assistant MARY KAY FRANCONERO-CECCARELLI (50s) stroll into the dining room...where they find an empty table.

MARY KAY
 (singing)
*Rockin' around the Christmas tree
 at the Christmas party hop--*

SANDRA
 (eyeballing Mary Kay)
 I know somebody who's really fired
 up about tonight.

MARILYN
 Well, Sandra, we all should be.

All four faculty members sit down.

JARROD
 That's the truth. I mean, this jazz
 band's already another feather in
 our school's cap.

MARY KAY
 Yeah...I liked how they walked out
 of the chapel and then came back
 and killed.

Mary Kay receives three shocked looks.

SANDRA
 Mary Kay...that walkout wasn't part
 of the act.

MARILYN
 I still wish Mary Ann were here.
 Then--

Onstage, Libby's ringing rhythm guitar carries Laura's chord-holding on organ, Hannah's hi-hat work, and Melody Rose's one-note bursts on bass guitar in a four-bar intro to the Average White Band's "Pick Up the Pieces."

With the intro out of the way, the band's remaining members enter the tune, which goes into its basic melody for the next thirty-two bars.

These bars feature the horn players (led by saxophonists Bridget, Jessica Anne, and Nina) "calling" while the rhythm section (now featuring Lakeisha on lead guitar and Aaliyah and Bella on electronic keyboards and/or pianos) "responds."

The next bar is a transitional one; it ends with an all-band single note that leads back to the basic melody.

Here, sixteen more bars of the call-and-response game ensue before the transitional bar kicks in.

Now, for the next four bars, the instrumentation's down to Nina, Jessica Anne, Hannah, and Bridget...while Barbara turns to the eaters and gestures them into the song's famous chant:

AUDIENCE

*Pick up the pieces! Uh huh!/Pick up
the pieces! All right!/Pick up the
pieces! Yeah!/Pick up the pieces!
WHOOOO!*

Nina becomes a soloist during the next sixteen bars..."Pick Up the Pieces'" bridge.

Her strong sax work leads to some strong applause from the crowd...and back to the tune's basic melody.

At a table toward the back of the room, TWO MARRIED COUPLES (one 60s, the other 30s) chow down and listen.

OLDER HUSBAND

(to his tablemates)

I don't get it. If that band's
supposed to be from Duchesne
Academy, why are there so many,
uh...minorities up there--

Older Husband receives three severe looks.

YOUNGER WIFE

Dad...don't start that again.

OLDER WIFE

Yeah, hon. They're up there because they're good. Period.

Younger Husband nods at Older Husband.

YOUNGER HUSBAND

Yeah. Just sit back and enjoy the food and the show.

YOUNGER WIFE

It's all paid for, Dad.

Older Husband just shrugs at Younger Wife.

Duchesne's jazz outfit rolls through twelve bars of basic melody, with the sax-driven call-and-response game front and center once again. Here, Lakeisha's and Libby's guitar work becomes more prominent.

Barbara's band stretches the transitional to eight bars before she invites the audience to sing along one more time:

AUDIENCE

Pick up the piece./Pick up the pieces./Pick up the pieces.

MARY KAY

YEAH!

During this audience singalong, the drums, bass, and guitars carry the music.

AUDIENCE

Pick up the pieces.

DAVE

WHOOOO!!

"Pick Up the Pieces" ends in two bars, with the full band bringing it home.

As the applause kicks in, Chuck and Chip (they occupy a front table) join in it.

Barbara blows a kiss toward Chip's and Chuck's table, then toward Greg's table.

When the cheering dies down, Chuck shoots Chip an angry look.

CHUCK

Son, when this is over, I wanna see you in my office.

Chip's too stunned to react.

EXT. MIKOLAJCZYKS' HOUSE - DAY

Christmas decorations dominate the house's front window.

INT. MIKOLAJCZYKS' LIVING ROOM - DAY

With A COLLEGE FOOTBALL GAME on the Mikolajczyks' TV set, Barbara and Greg entertain family...starting with Barbara's sister LORETTA CARNRICK-JOHN (61) and brother-in-law LUKE JOHN (62), who sit on the sofa.

Luke and Loretta share Barbara's strong Texas twang.

Greg's and Barbara's son MIKE MIKOLAJCZYK (25) and daughter-in-law KRIS STONE-MIKOLAJCZYK (24) emerge from the kitchen with bowls of snacks that end up on the TV trays.

As Kris and Mike take seats on lounge chairs, the throng hears the doorbell RING.

Loretta gets up...but Barbara waves her off.

BARBARA

Just chill, Loretta. Ah've got this.

Loretta shrugs her way back to the sofa; Barbara opens the door...and the youngest Mikolajczyk child, RACHEL (21), arrives alongside big sister ERIN MIKOLAJCZYK-BRIGGS (30) and Erin's husband RASHAD BRIGGS (32, Black).

Rashad, Rachel, and Erin come in with bags full of two-liter bottles of pop.

Rachel goes into the kitchen while Barbara and Rashad high-five each other.

RASHAD

You did it, Mrs. M. Way to go!

ERIN

(high-fiving Barbara)
Mom, I told you you could do it!

KRIS

Do what, Erin?

BARBARA

Ah got me a muscle car. Always wanted one...ever since Ah saw Janet Guthrie racin' at Indy on TV.

Loretta casts suspicious eyes toward Barbara while Erin and Rashad go into the kitchen.

Rachel peeks through the kitchen door to eyeball Greg.

RACHEL
Dad, how's the game going?

GREG
Well, Rachel, Hawaii's kicking some tail.

With the pop put away, Erin, Rachel, and Rashad enter the living room and sit anyplace they can find.

LORETTA
Speakin' of tail, Rachel...when're you gonna git you some tail?

RACHEL
Aunt Loretta--

BARBARA
(to Loretta)
Now just wait a cotton-pickin' minute!

LUKE
Loretta, honey...now you just let Rachel be, y'hear? She's got her whole li'l' ol' life ahead of her.

Some of the guests munch away on snacks.

RACHEL
Thanks, Uncle Luke...I just figured: "What's wrong with figuring out how to get along before figuring out how to get it on?"

While some within earshot applaud Rachel, Greg's got an enormous grin.

GREG
See? You can't beat that logic, can you?

Greg, Barbara, and Rachel exchange high fives.

LORETTA
 Speakin' of logic...Barbara...BAD
 BARB...how come you ain't teachin'
 algebra in school anymore?

Barbara's mouth flies open.

MIKE
 Aunt Loretta, sounds like you saw
 that video of Duchesne Academy's
 new jazz band.
 (grinning)
 I've gotta admit: Mom's a heck of a
 band director.

LORETTA
 (nodding)
 Mike, it's one thang to trade in an
 SUV for a muscle car...but it's
 another thang to trade in a career
 teachin' a vital STEM class for
 leadin' a jazz band--

Luke points at Loretta.

LUKE
 C'mon, honey! Let Barbara be!

LORETTA
 Look here, Barbara, Ah wanna know
 one thang: Are you goin' through a
 change or--

GREG
 Loretta, don't go there! She fought
 for six years to get that band
 started--

Rashad turns to Erin.

RASHAD
 They always like this when they get
 togeth--

ERIN
 Rashad, hon...you don't wanna go
 there.

Barbara grabs the TV's clicker and MUTES the sound...and
 triggers AD LIBBED protests from a few relatives.

BARBARA

Look here, y'all: Y'all are lucky
it's halftime!

Barbara points the clicker at Loretta.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

Let's git somethin' straight,
Loretta Louise Carnrick-John: Ah
can wear both hats if Ah want to!
Ah'm still teachin' algebra...and
directin' the jazz band at
Duchesne!

KRIS

You tell 'em!

BARBARA

Thanks, Kris.

Barbara points the remote at Loretta and treats it as if it's
a gun.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

And, Loretta, Ah want you to know
somethin' else: Ah'm. Not. Havin'.
A. Midlife. Crisis.

Loretta gets seven withering looks.

Greg's look is the exception: He's beaming.

EXT. DUCHESNE ACADEMY - DAY

SOME STUDENTS stroll or sprint toward the school as the
academic year picks back up.

INT. DUCHESNE MUSIC ROOM - DAY

Barbara's laptop rests atop "Methuselah" as the computer
BLARES OUT Willis Jackson's lively "Gator's Groove."

The band's sixteen members and its director listen hard.

When the tune's finished, Barbara's eyes light up. She shuts
her laptop OFF.

Students (some confused) look at one another, then turn their
gazes upon Barbara.

LAKEISHA

Very interesting selection, Mrs.
Mikolajczyk.

BARBARA

And, Lakeisha, it's just the kinda thang we can sprang on people when we play the Omaha Downtown Marriott durin' "Conge."

Barbara's remark sets bandmembers abuzz.

OLIVIA

It's a great opportunity, but does Mrs. Kiefer know about us playing at "Conge?"

BARBARA

Nope.

Some young mouths fly open.

EVELYN

Well..."Conge" is all about surprise. It's a surprise holiday.

MELODY ROSE

I see your point, Evelyn...and who better to surprise than Mrs. Kiefer?

Melody Rose's remark gains boisterous, AD LIBBED support.

MELODY ROSE (CONT'D)

And...getting back to "Gator's Groove," Mrs. Mikolajczyk...since you said the tune emphasized saxophones and organ and had no string bass or bass guitar...

An impressed Barbara slowly nods.

MELODY ROSE (CONT'D)

I can get hold of a bass sax.

Melody Rose gets incredulous looks from girls around her...and answers those looks by flexing her muscles.

LAURA

And Mrs. Mikolajczyk, I can play a little saxophone.

Barbara shakes her head up and down.

LAURA (CONT'D)

That way, that gives Bella a chance to show what she can do as a jazz organist.

Bella shoots Laura a surprised look that morphs into a grin.

BELLA

Laura...it's on. Bring it on.

The music room erupts in cheers.

BARBARA

Speakin' of Bella...Ah wanna thank every last one of you for takin' up her challenge to talk up our jazz band with the teachers in the parochial schools.

Concerned looks replace the cheers.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

And only one parochial school was willin' to let us come over there.

Some bandmembers shrug; others give heavy nods.

EXT. NORTH 24TH STREET - DAY

A school bus plods its way up the main thoroughfare of once-thriving-but-still-proud North Omaha.

INT. SCHOOL BUS - DAY

Bella, Hannah, Olivia, and Samantha look nervous as they gaze out the window and see all that greenery in these (to them) unfamiliar surroundings.

Melody Rose watches as Elle tries to take deep breaths.

MELODY ROSE

Remember, Elle: You're courageous.

Lizzy and Libby catch the Claussen sisters' nervous looks. Lizzy points toward the front of the bus.

LIZZY

That's Twenty-Fourth and Lake, you guys.

HANNAH

Don't remind me.

LIBBY

Hey, look...back in the day, that corner was really jumpin'.

LIZZY

Libby's right. This is where the jazz scene here in Omaha got started...and grew.

Bella nods in understanding.

Elsewhere on the bus, Aaliyah notices seatmate Evelyn's eyes are shut.

AALIYAH

Come on, Evelyn! Open those peepers!

EVELYN

Do...I...have to?

AALIYAH

It's safer riding up here than trying to cross Eighty-Fourth Street down in Papillion.

As Lizzy turns to look at Aaliyah, Evelyn opens her own eyes.

Across the aisle, Nina eyeballs Aaliyah.

NINA

Aaliyah, don't you live in Bellevue?

AALIYAH

You're right, Nina. You busted me.

Those around the two musicians laugh.

EXT. SACRED HEART SCHOOL - DAY

This is a small, proud-looking reddish-brick building from the Jazz Age.

Barbara and her school's jazz band file out of the bus and stare at the edifice as they walk toward it.

BARBARA

Y'all are lookin' at one of the finest Catholic grade schools in town. They really kick some tail.

HANNAH

That's what I'm afraid of.

JESSICA ANNE

(to Hannah)

Academically. Academically.

Academically.

Hannah nods.

INT. SACRED HEART GYM - DAY

At an assembly, STUDENTS AND FACULTY sit on folding chairs, on bleachers, or on the floor...and they're in the groove as Barbara conducts Duchesne's jazz outfit in a big-band setup around the free-throw circle.

The band's halfway through Patrice Rushen's "Hang It Up." Right now, Hannah plays the song's two-bar drum solo.

It becomes a duet when Lakeisha adds wah-wah guitar; two bars later, Bella comes in on conga drums. A couple of bars ensue before Laura comes in on electronic keyboard and becomes the soloist for the next eight bars.

The buildup continues when Libby's rhythm guitar and Aaliyah's piano jump in, with the latter taking the lead.

Aaliyah pounds out a sixteen-bar romp where Melody Rose muscles in on bass guitar nine bars in.

At the end of Aaliyah's romp, trumpeters Janie, Lizzy, and Olivia join saxophonists Bridget, Jessica Anne, and Nina, as well as trombonists Elle, Evelyn, and Samantha, to take over the next twenty-three bars.

Toward the end of this passage, the horn players and Aaliyah do the call-and-response game.

Some students jump up and dance.

As the tune goes into a new key for eight bars, Sacred Heart's music teacher, SHANICE GIBSON (40s, exuberant, Black), hands maracas, shakers, and/or tambourines to A FEW STUDENTS...who quickly shake those instruments to the beat.

Meanwhile, during this eight-bar passage, Lizzy leads her fellow horn players in good ol' Call and Response.

"Hang It Up's" final twelve (or more) bars, in the previous key, feature Nina, Jessica Anne, and the trumpet players making the "calls" while Bridget and the trombone players "respond" as the rhythm crew continues to cook.

Result: The Sacred Heart gym rocks with applause.

Barbara and Shanice meet at a center mike, where they high-five each other.

SHANICE
 (into mike)
 Now that's what I'm talking about!
 (gesturing to audience)
 One more time...let's show our love
 for the Duchesne Academy Jazz Band!

Faculty and students alike pour on the applause.

SHANICE (CONT'D)
 Mrs. Mikolajczyk...you got anything
 for an encore?

BARBARA
 Wail, Mrs. Gibson...let's see...

Barbara turns to percussionists Bella and Hannah.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
 You two got anythang for an encore?

A nodding Hannah rips into a high-flying drum solo...and Bella, who's all smiles, adds conga work a bar later.

EXT. OMAHA MARRIOTT DOWNTOWN - DAY

Here's an ultra-modern, thirteen-story hotel in the city's Old Market.

Barbara, Greg, Amy, Dave, Patti, and Duchesne's sixteen jazz musicians lug instruments (including a pre-1929 upright piano and a spinet organ), amps, and music stands toward the hotel's front entrance.

They all wear nonmatching men's suits, fedoras, vests, and neckties or bow ties...as well as overcoats.

INT. OMAHA MARRIOTT DOWNTOWN LOBBY - DAY

Duchesne's famous "Conge" celebration is an hour away.

PEOPLE OF ALL AGES fill the lobby...most of them associated, one way or another, with Duchesne Academy. Most wear casual clothes, too.

Lots of mouths fly open as Barbara and her fedora-attired entourage sneak those instruments and such through the lobby.

Lorrienne, Jenna, and Hallie watch it all.

JENNA

(to Lorrienne)

Hey, congratulations, Ms. Keim. You and your mock trial club pulled it off again.

LORRIANNE

Well, thanks, Jenna. It's not easy to defend the state mock trial championship, but...

Jenna and Lorrienne shake hands while Hallie turns to the twosome, then back to the entourage.

HALLIE

Speaking of pulling it off...

LORRIANNE

Yep, Hallie...Mrs. Mikolajczyk pulled it off, all right.

HALLIE

Good on her! I know she'd been fighting six years to do this.

Marilyn, Mary Ann, Sandra, and Ty watch the sixteen teenagers and five adults haul stuff through the lobby.

MARY ANN

I don't believe it.

TY

Believe what, Mary Ann?

MARY ANN

They're heading toward the Capitol Ballroom, Tyson.

SANDRA

Maybe they're gonna--

MARY ANN

I don't believe it...

Marilyn gathers Ty, Sandra, and Mary Ann around her.

MARILYN

Tell you what, you guys: Let's go grab some coffee and relax.

MARY ANN
 Marilyn, I need a stiff drink, not
 some dad-burned coffee!

The man and the three women break the huddle and head for:

INT. OMAHA MARRIOTT DOWNTOWN COFFEEHOUSE - DAY

In this Starbucks-type operation, Sandra, Ty, Mary Ann, and
 Marilyn sit at a small table and, well, sip coffee.

MARILYN
 Guys...did you know that a flute
 takes more lung power to play than
 any other musical instrument?

MARY ANN
 (to Marilyn)
 Did Barbara feed you that?

MARILYN
 No, Mary Ann. I stumbled onto this
 online article written by the
 director of the Girls Ellington
 Project out in Seattle. And it
 talked about this.

Sandra's and Ty's heads nod.

SANDRA
 Yeah...Barbara told me about the
 Girls Ellington Project. They're
 pretty darn good.

Mary Ann gives Sandra an openmouthed look.

MARY ANN
 Sandra Marie Poltl, whose side are
 you on?

MARILYN
 Anyway, it does take more lung
 power to play a flute than any
 other instrument there is...yet
 music educators everywhere still
 tend to steer girls in school
 toward flutes and clarinets--

TY
 Because they're lighter to carry
 than trumpets, saxophones, and
 trombones.

MARILYN

That's right!

SANDRA

To say nothing of tubas...when I went to Duchesne back in the Eighties, I lived next door to a girl who went to Omaha South. She played a tuba in the marching band.

Marilyn slowly nods.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

Debbie VanLandingham. She was pretty good.

MARILYN

See?

SANDRA

Only thing about it: Debbie had to fight with the school band director...he wanted her to play the flute.

(takes a sip)

And that flute looked like a toothpick in Debbie's hands.

MARILYN

See that? You see what kind of message too many of us send when we gender musical instr--

MARY ANN

It's simple, Marilyn: Don't take up the flute if you're a heavy smoker.

Mary Ann's remark cracks up her tablemates.

AN O.S. DRUM INTRO stops all conversations.

INT. OMAHA MARRIOTT DOWNTOWN CAPITOL BALLROOM - DAY

Thanks to the drum intro, an enormous, elegant space fills up with "Conge" participants by the trickles.

Barbara and Duchesne's jazz band (minus the overcoats) go hard at it in a big-band setup toward the front as they fire up "Gator's Groove."

Hannah delivers the drum intro, a four-bar affair that leads to a raucous, boisterous sixteen-bar call-and-response workout where the first eight bars repeat themselves.

In this pattern, Aaliyah (on piano) and Libby (on guitar) help Hannah with the rhythm...while Bella's organ "responds" to the "calls" of a horn section that includes Lakeisha on soprano sax, Melody Rose on bass sax, and Laura on a toy sax. The remaining nine teenagers play their usual instruments.

As Jessica Anne (on tenor sax) takes the first solo (it's eight bars long and enables Bella to hold her organ chords longer), Ty, Sandra, Mary Ann, and Marilyn join the Capitol Ballroom throng.

"Gator's Groove" returns to the eight-bar call-and-response pattern. When it does, Mary Kay and a reluctant Lorrienne dance with each other.

And then...Jessica Anne takes over for the next fifty-seven raucous, pounding bars.

Jessica Anne's sax spree gets lyrical as the remaining horn players turn into "respondents" and Bella's organ work establishes a sort of musical glue.

In the ever-growing crowd, Billy eyeballs his wife, CONNIE CURRIVAN (40s).

BILLY

Connie...you wanna dance?

CONNIE

To a high school jazz band?

BILLY

It's "Conge!"

Connie shrugs as she and Billy find an empty space...where they bust some moves.

Halfway through the solo, Jessica Anne's playing heats up. At the solo's forty-eighth bar, the call-and-response pattern becomes clearer...and some audience members clap to the beat.

Meanwhile, Lorrienne and Mary Kay continue to cut a rug with one another.

Jarrold walks into the ballroom with Mary Kay's hubby, MARIO CECCARELLI (50s).

MARIO

Jarrold, you're having another fine year as athletic director.

JARROD

Well, thanks...but I can't take all
the cred--

Their mouths drop when the two men watch the two women dance.

Now the horn players take "Gator's Groove" through one last
eight-bar set of basic melody...with Bella punctuating each
horn line with her organ chords.

The tune reaches its end when the instrumentation drops down
to Jessica Anne's tenor and Bridget's baritone for one next-
to-last note...and the fourteen other girls join them for one
boisterous final, drawn-out note.

Dave and Patti salute their daughters, then the rest of the
band, while the Capitol Ballroom explodes in applause.

In response, the bandmembers and Barbara tip their hats.

Mary Kay and Lorrienne approach Greg when the cheering dies.

MARY KAY

Greg...would you like the next
dance?

Now Mario approaches Mary Kay and Lorrienne.

GREG

Nah. I'm good.

While Greg gazes at Barbara, Jarrod goes over to Lorrienne.

INT. DUCHESNE SECOND FLOOR CLASSROOM - DAY

Barbara scribbles equations on the whiteboard as her algebra
students watch.

BARBARA

Awraht...now that we've got a
system of equations on the board,
what're the two ways we can solve
this system?

Aretha quickly raises her hand...and draws withering stares
from a few classmates.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

Aretha?

ARETHA

Substitution or elimination.

BARBARA
That's absolutely right.

A smile crosses Aretha's face while those few classmates continue to stare at her.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
Hey, y'all...that answer's in every
single textbook in this class. So
instead of starin' at Aretha...

Stockard's and Tatum's mouths fly open.

STOCKARD
Mrs. Mikolajczyk, I wasn't staring
at Aretha.

BARBARA
Okay, Stockard...tail the class
what the two lines in a system of
equations do.

STOCKARD
They converge at one point.

TATUM
(to Stockard)
Don't you mean intersect?

The bell RINGS the class to an end.

BARBARA
Class, we'll take this up next
time.

As students file out of the classroom...

BARBARA (CONT'D)
Happy trails to you.

...Mary Ann comes through the newly-open door.

MARY ANN
Barbara...I wanna talk to you about
your band's "Conge" performance.

Mary Ann and Barbara walk out of the classroom.

INT. DUCHESNE OFFICE OF EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT - DAY

As the twosome pass by this somewhat-sparse office, Mary Kay's at her desk, where she hums "Gator's Groove" while she does her job.

Mary Kay gives Barbara a "thumbs up" and triggers a smile from the latter.

MARY ANN
 (to Mary Kay)
 Whose side are you on?

MARY KAY
 (rising)
 Well, the jazz band's "Conge" video
 is about to go viral.

Barbara's and Mary Ann's mouths fly open.

INT. DUCHESNE OFFICE OF HEAD OF SCHOOL - DAY

Mary Ann's office is the plushiest, ritziest in the school...and the chairs in it typify the opulence.

Barbara lowers herself into the chair across from the desk...only to get thumbed out of the action by Mary Ann, who remains erect.

MARY ANN
 Barbara, why didn't you check with
 me first about bringing your jazz
 band to "Conge?"

BARBARA
 Wail...you would've said "no."

MARY ANN
 You don't know that.

BARBARA
 Wail...we both know this: Those
 videos Marilyn's puttin' up of the
 school's jazz band on her YouTube
 channel are goin' viral. Somebody's
 likin' 'em.

Mary Ann goes to her desk to turn her computer on (or refresh its screen if the computer's already on).

MARY ANN
 And that group of somebodies had
 better include judges from the
 Nebraska State Bandmasters
 Association.

With a few mouse clicks, Mary Ann gets the page she's after.

MARY ANN (CONT'D)

After all, Barbara...if this jazz band of yours doesn't get a one rating at the state jazz band festival this April...and if one of your band's musicians doesn't get an Outstanding Soloist Award...

Mary Ann gestures Barbara into joining her behind the desk.

MARY ANN (CONT'D)

I'm shutting your band down. And you'll be out of a job.

BARBARA

Wait a cotton-pickin' minute!

MARY ANN

Look at this computer screen.

The teacher and the head of school gaze at the screen.

MARY ANN (CONT'D)

Our algebra test scores are down from last academic year.

BARBARA

Mary Ann, that's just two percent.

MARY ANN

Just two percent? That's the difference between owning a fast-food chain and being the one behind the counter asking: "Do you want fries with that?"

Barbara and Mary Ann stare at each other.

EXT. MIKOLAJCZYKS' HOUSE - NIGHT

Both Mikolajczyk cars are parked in the driveway.

INT. BARBARA'S AND GREG'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

With their pajamas on, Greg and Barbara sit up in bed, where he watches her type on her laptop.

BARBARA

And, Greg...Mary Ann didn't say a cotton-pickin' thang when Ah asked her: "If you git rid of me, are you gonna git rid of 'Methuselah,' too?"

Greg looks incredulous as he eyes Barbara's resume on her laptop's screen.

GREG
You're not thinking about giving up, are you?

BARBARA
Ah'm just doin' this just in case.

GREG
You're not really thinking about giving up...are you?

BARBARA
Have they quit growin' tobacco in North Carolina?

GREG
I wish they did.

Barbara's satisfied with her resume polish. She turns the laptop off.

BARBARA
Let's both hit the reset button.

GREG
Okay, Barbara...you aren't thinking about giving up, are you?

BARBARA
Have they stopped raisin' cattle here in Nebraska?

Greg shakes his head "no" while Barbara closes her laptop.

INT. DUCHESNE MUSIC ROOM - DAY

Barbara and the Duchesne Academy Jazz Band turn the Chiffons' "One Fine Day" into a barnburner.

Halfway through, Hannah takes a twelve-bar drum solo.

BARBARA
That's right, Hannah! Show your guts!

As Hannah grows more aggressive on those skins, Bella (seated at "Methuselah"), Aaliyah (seated at "Moses"), and Laura (seated at the organ) eyeball Barbara in eagerness.

AALIYAH

Now?

BARBARA

Go for it!

Laura sprints to a seat at "Moses," Bella runs to a seat at the organ, and Aaliyah runs to a seat at "Methuselah."

All three keyboardists pound out the tune's basic melody; four bars later, Melody Rose comes up with bass guitar work made up of two-note patterns.

Lakeisha and Libby swap guitars; four bars after Melody Rose starts her two-note patterns, the two guitarists jump in with their ringing, jangling rhythm.

And four bars after Libby and Lakeisha jump in there, trombonists Samantha, Evelyn, and Elle add drawn-out notes.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

Keep it sharp, trombonists!

Bridget, Nina, and Jessica Anne (all on sax) team up with trumpeters Olivia, Lizzy, and Janie to take over the melody during the next sixteen bars...while the rhythm section and the trombonists play supporting riffs.

In a number where a "verse" is twelve bars long, the band repeats bars nine through twelve several times...each repeat more intense and more raucous than the previous one.

It all ends with one boisterous all-band note.

The band director and her charges whoop it up.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

Ah really like that! Let's build on that!

More cheering from the teens.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

Now...thank what we could do if we spent some time with other high school jazz bands.

Aaliyah, Bella, Laura, Lizzy, and Melody Rose nod.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

That's why all of us in this room are goin' to the Great Plains Jazz Festival next month.

SAMANTHA

Just as long as it doesn't collide
with a film festival.

A few bandmembers laugh.

BARBARA

Samantha, you won't have to worry
about that, 'cause the Great Plains
Jazz Festival will be at UNO on
February twenty-sixth, then
downtown at the Holland Performin'
Arts Center the next day.

Some students stare at Samantha, who shakes her head "yes."

BARBARA (CONT'D)

It's a chance for us to git
ourselves extra sharp for the
Nebraska State Jazz Festival.

SAMANTHA

Count me in, Mrs. Mikolajczyk!
(to her bandmates)
Whaddya say?

Samantha's cheering fellow musicians AD LIB their agreement.

EXT. STRAUSS PERFORMING ARTS CENTER AT UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA
AT OMAHA - DAY

This is an impressive 1970s-era building on the north central
side of the UNO campus.

INT. STRAUSS PAC CONCERT HALL - DAY

All of Duchesne's jazz musicians except Hannah meet on the
stage of the Strauss Center's main performance space.

The stage sports a big-band setup...and that includes a grand
piano and a drum set that needs cymbals.

None of that stops Bella and Laura from looking up at the
hall's pipe organ.

LAURA

Bella, how cool would it be to put
an organ like that in TD Ameritrade
Park? And use that during the Men's
College World Series?

BELLA

Well, uh...it wouldn't be traditional. They brought in that old Hammond they used to use at Rosenblatt Stadium.

(beaming)

Now that's traditional.

LAURA

Speaking of breaking traditions...ever since I was nine, I've dreamed of becoming the first female organist in Men's CWS history.

BELLA

Best of luck to you, Laura. They've had only two organists ever since they started having the Men's College World Series here in Omaha...back in 1950.

LAURA

Just as long as I don't have to wait 'til I'm sick and old.

Some bandmembers look antsy as TED POGGEMEIER (70s), a band clinician, strolls onto the stage, looks around, and addresses the teenagers.

TED

Let me get this straight: You girls are all from Omaha Duchesne?

At last, Hannah sprints onto the stage. She totes a large trash bag that holds some cymbals.

LIZZY

(to Ted)

Yes, we are. One of the oldest high schools in town has the newest high school jazz band in town.

(with a grin)

How cool is that?

TED

Where's your band director?

Olivia eyeballs her twin sis...trash bag and all.

OLIVIA

Hannah...did you remember to bring your own cymbals?

HANNAH
Did Russia take part in America's
2016 elections?

As Hannah yanks her cymbals out of that trash bag, Barbara jogs onto the stage...and sets off sighs of relief.

Ted walks up to Barbara.

TED
You knew about the band clinic this
afternoon, didn't you?

BARBARA
Yes, Ah did, Ted...but the
directors' workshop just now let
out.

Ted looks confused.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
And it was all because the workshop
director got in an argument with me
because he couldn't name five
professional female jazz
instrumentalists...livin' ones.

The sixteen teens take their place in the big-band setup;
Hannah attaches the cymbals to the drum set.

TED
Are we ready?

BARBARA
You know...he would've made a great
Nicodemus.

Ted looks lost.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
Needin' a rebirth.

Ted gives Barbara a weak nod.

EXT. MILO BAIL STUDENT CENTER AT UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT
OMAHA - DAY

SOME STUDENTS file into this renovated-into-modernity
building, the school's memorial union.

INT. MILO BAIL STUDENT CENTER HALLWAY - DAY

Full trombone cases in tow, Evelyn, Samantha, and Elle head for an instrument-specific clinic.

ELLE

You know, we really need to come to this workshop. We're the weakest section in the band.

SAMANTHA

Wait a minute, Elle--

ELLE

Well, look: All the other sections have somebody who's top-notch.

Samantha's is a weak nod.

ELLE (CONT'D)

Lizzy's one of the best trumpet players in town.

Evelyn's mouth flies open.

ELLE (CONT'D)

We're lucky to have her. And Janie, too. And Jessica Anne, Nina, and Bridget really cook on saxophone. And our rhythm section is off the charts. They're way ahead of the rest of us!

Elle opens the door to the threesome's destination...

INT. MILO BAIL STUDENT CENTER CLINIC ROOM - DAY

...and escorts her fellow trombonists inside while the clinician, GRANT "SONNY" MCDONALD (50s, Black), watches from the front of the room.

EVELYN

(somewhat quietly)

Okay, Elle. Me and Sam'll do this...anything to take my mind away from those text messages I keep getting from Tamara Sue Zimmermann.

The three Duchesne students find seats in a room A DOZEN (OR SO) OTHER YOUNG TROMBONISTS occupy.

EVELYN (CONT'D)

I didn't put that "Kick Me" sign on her. Me and my folks were at home watching TV that night.

Only one of the other trombone players in the room is female.

SONNY

Well...there goes the neighborhood.

Samantha, Elle, and Evelyn look stunned as the rest of the class watches the threesome.

ELLE

He did not say that.

And Samantha wags her finger at Sonny.

EXT. HOLLAND PERFORMING ARTS CENTER - DAY

On this early Saturday morning, SOME BAND STUDENTS pace their way into this sleek, glassy, ultra-modern downtown building.

INT. CASSLING CENTER AT HOLLAND PAC - DAY

In a breakout room in this multipurpose educational space, Evelyn, Samantha, and Elle play their trombones to AN UPTEMPO JAZZ TUNE on Elle's laptop.

The live music stops when Janie, trumpet in hands, sprints into the room...and breathes a sigh of relief.

JANIE

There you are...we were worried about you.

Elle shuts her laptop off.

SAMANTHA

Well, Janie, we had to do something after the way Mr. McDonald treated us at the trombone clinic yesterday.

(mocking Sonny)

Well...there goes the neighborhood.

ELLE

You know what hurts? He's supposed to be one of the best jazz trombone instructors in the country!

Janie nods.

ELLE (CONT'D)

And I thought he'd be the last person to say: "There goes the neighborhood."

EVELYN

We'd better get over to the hall right now! Janie didn't come over here for the fun of it!

Three sets of eyes turn to Evelyn as the trombonists hurry to pack up their instruments and the laptop.

EVELYN (CONT'D)

Actually, Janie...you did!

JANIE

(nodding)

It's just like Mr. Currivan says in the locker room: "Let's show 'em we've got the chops!"

The four now-fired-up young musicians sprint out of the room.

INT. PETER KIEWIT HALL AT HOLLAND PAC - DAY

This is the Holland Center's main recital hall...and it fills up with PEOPLE as Barbara and the Duchesne Academy Jazz Band prepare to concertize.

A grand piano and a couple of electronic keyboards are part of the big-band setup onstage...but nobody sits at them.

Instead, Laura wields her toy sax...and Aaliyah and Evelyn plug electric guitars into amps. Libby plugs a bass guitar into another amp.

Lakeisha warms up on her soprano sax while Hannah and Bella each occupy a drum set.

Bridget stuffs her own brass mouthpiece into Evelyn's trombone while Melody Rose fastens her woodwind mouthpiece onto Bridget's baritone sax.

Evelyn pulls out her own brass mouthpiece and holds it out for all to see.

Elle, Janie, Jessica Anne, Lizzy, Nina, Olivia, and Samantha stay on their respective instruments.

BARBARA

Everybody ready?

The bandmembers AD LIB their affirmations or nod.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

One...two...three...four!

Duchesne's aggregation takes off and running on James Brown's "Sudsy," a 1969 remake of his 1962 "Suds."

Libby teams up with trumpeter Lizzy and tenor sax player Jessica Anne to power out a one-bar intro that leads to twelve fast-paced standard blues bars. In these dozen bars, saxophonists Nina and Melody Rose come in...as do Hannah, Evelyn, Bella, and Aaliyah.

The next dozen bars see trumpeters Janie and Olivia join in with trombonists Bridget, Elle, and Samantha (as well as sax players Laura and Lakeisha) to enter this pulsating, torridly-paced "Suds."

Ted and Sonny watch from front-row seats...and gasp.

Onstage, the band goes back to the one-bar intro before Nina becomes the tune's first soloist.

Nina grooves for the next thirty-four bars...and causes Barbara to smile.

During Nina's solo, a pattern emerges: Lead guitarist Aaliyah plays "calls" and Evelyn "responds" on rhythm guitar.

While Sonny and Ted continue to look slack-mouthed, Patti, Dave, and other band parents look onstage in pride.

Lakeisha quickly takes over as the next soloist...and shows her growth on soprano sax with a forty-eight-bar spree.

Before Lakeisha's turn ends, the audience applauds...and drummers Bella and Hannah pound "Sudsy" back into its introductory bar.

Now Aaliyah plucks away for the next eleven bars (and ends the guitarists' call-and-response act).

The brass/reed group heats up the tune by carrying the next twenty-four bars...while Aaliyah continues to pluck away and Melody Rose's baritone playing becomes more prominent.

Aaliyah solos the next twelve bars before the saxophonists, trombonists, and trumpeters take the band through a dozen-bar set that mirrors "Sudsy's" early going.

The brass players drop out in the next twelve bars...and come back to help the band end the tune with a stretched-out version of the opening bar.

Seated together in the middle, Dean, Gordon, and Sherryll join in the audience applause.

GORDON

I wish Duchesne had a jazz band when my niece went there. She really loved to play drums, but--

DEAN

That's funny. That's not the same band I saw on YouTube.

Sherryll nods as Dean turns to Gordon.

DEAN (CONT'D)

You seen their first video? The girl who just got through playing lead guitar usually plays piano. A mean piano.

An enthusiastic Gordon shakes his head "yes."

SHERRYLL

That's right, Dean. That's not the same band...they're better than that now...more versatile.

And Ted and Sonny continue to sit openmouthed.

EXT. DUCHESNE ACADEMY - DAY

In the parking lot, Barbara checks her Dodge Charger's fluid levels when Anne Marie approaches her.

ANNE MARIE

How was the Great Plains Jazz Festival?

BARBARA

Wail, Anne Marie, it was just like the Russians workin' with America's Republicans to defeat the Democrats.

ANNE MARIE

Surely you jest, Barbara. They can't rig a festival like that...can they?

Satisfied with her Charger's fluid levels, Barbara lets the hood down.

BARBARA
Wail, they gave us a two.

ANNE MARIE
Oh, dear...

BARBARA
The judges said a two means
"excellent."

Anne Marie nods.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
And then they turned around and
said a one means "superior."

ANNE MARIE
Barbara...what happened?

BARBARA
Ah'll tail you what happened: They
talked about some of our musicians
swappin' instruments in the middle
of a few songs.

ANNE MARIE
And the judges got you for that?

BARBARA
(nodding)
What those judges saw as confusion
was actually us bein' versatile.

Barbara heads for her car's driver's-side door.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
Ever heard of a band called Switch?

Anne Marie shakes her head "no."

BARBARA (CONT'D)
Jermaine Jackson discovered 'em
back in the late Seventies when he
was still workin' for Motown. He--

A RINGTONE emerges from Barbara's pants pocket.

ANNE MARIE
(heading off)
See you tomorrow, Barbara!

Barbara grabs her cell phone and waves at Anne Marie.

BARBARA
 (into phone)
 Hi there. This is Barbara.

Now Barbara gets in her muscle car.

INT. OFFICE AT SEATTLE JAZZED, SEATTLE, WA - DAY

Cell phone against her ear, MACKENZIE O'MALLEY (40s, competitive, calm) sits at her desk in an office whose walls feature lots of photos of jazz musicians of both genders.

MACKENZIE
 So glad to hear from you, Barbara.
 I'm Mackenzie O'Malley from the
 Girls Ellington Project.

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

BARBARA
 Mackenzie, am Ah so glad to hear
 from you.

MACKENZIE
 You still wanna come here to
 Seattle on your spring break?

BARBARA
 Like a tired horse lookin' for a
 long, cool drank of water!

A huge smile crosses Mackenzie's face.

MACKENZIE
 Great!

BARBARA
 Ah saw your Facebook page the other
 day...and Ah didn't like how they
 did the Ellin'ton Project when
 y'all went down to Savannah,
 Georgia.

MACKENZIE
 Tell me about it! It was just like
 the Russians working with America's
 Republicans to defeat the
 Democrats.

Barbara's mouth flies open.

EXT. EPPLEY AIRFIELD - DAY

PEOPLE hurry in and out of the terminal in the early afternoon at Omaha's international airport.

INT. EPPLEY AIRFIELD TERMINAL - TICKET COUNTER - DAY

Barbara's at the front of the line of an obscenely-busy ticket counter; Duchesne's sixteen jazz musicians stand right in back of her, with Samantha and Evelyn the closest to Barbara and the counter.

Behind the counter, THE CLERK (a woman in her 30s) looks surprised as she talks with Barbara.

CLERK

You mean all seventeen of you are gonna spend your spring break in Seattle?

Several heads nod.

SAMANTHA

Well, Jimi Hendrix was born there. And Quincy Jones went to high school there and developed his musical skills there.

EVELYN

And don't forget: Carol Channing was born in Seattle, too.

A "huh?" look crosses Samantha's face.

BARBARA

And grunge got started there!

Samantha nods at Barbara, then at the clerk.

SAMANTHA

And another thing: They filmed some of the 1982 movie "Frances" at the Seattle Paramount Theater...and I wanna play the organ over there, like they did in "Frances."

CLERK

Usually, kids going on spring break go somewhere warmer...like Los Angeles or South Padre Island or Cancun.

BARBARA

Wail, all Ah know is we've got a reservation to catch us a nonstop from Omaha to Seattle...and we need seventeen tickets.

SAMANTHA

And our plane takes off in two hours.

At the back of the line, Libby and Lizzy watch OTHER TRAVELERS move up and down the aisle...when Marilyn, bags and all, lines up behind the young musicians.

Lizzy and Libby turn around and look shocked.

LIZZY

Ms. McCutcheon...

LIBBY

Are you going back to LA for spring break?

MARILYN

(shaking her head "no")
I'm going to Seattle.

Libby points at Lizzy, then at Marilyn.

LIBBY

With us?

MARILYN

I just thought you and Mrs. Mikolajczyk might like the emotional and technical support.

Marilyn sets her bags down; she, Lizzy, and Libby make it a group hug.

EXT. EPPLEY AIRFIELD - DAY

The jet airliner carrying Duchesne's two-person music department and the sixteen teens takes off...

EXT. SEATTLE-TACOMA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, SEATTLE, WA - DAY

...and heads for a runway as Mount Rainier watches it all in the distance.

MONTAGE SEQUENCE

INT. PIKE PLACE MARKET - DAY

In this noisy, quirky, charming, fun landmark, Marilyn and Barbara join with bandmembers in tossing money into the life-size piggy bank known as Rachel the Pig.

Laura rubs Rachel's nose.

Janie, Lakeisha, and Melody Rose break out cameras or cell phones to snap photos of the mural above the market entrance.

EXT. SPACE NEEDLE - DAY

PEOPLE file into the Emerald City's most famous structure.

INT. SPACE NEEDLE - DAY

The Omahans reach the top and check out the wraparound view the Space Needle offers of Seattle.

EXT. MUSEUM OF POP CULTURE - DAY

The monorail runs right by this unusual-looking building.

INT. SOUND LAB - JAM STUDIO - DAY

Guitarist Bella, drummer Hannah, and keyboardist Olivia rock out at one of MoPOP's most popular attractions.

EXT. PARAMOUNT THEATER - DAY

Here's a nine-story icon from the Jazz Age.

INT. PARAMOUNT THEATER STAGE - DAY

Aaliyah, Bella, Bridget, Elle, Evelyn, and Hannah take turns playing the theater's four-manual Wurlitzer pipe organ...while the other twelve members of the Duchesne entourage crowd around the instrument.

INT. FOOD COURT - DAY

The two women and sixteen girls pig out!

INT. LUMEN FIELD - NIGHT

The Omaha/Council Bluffs/Bellevue Gang watch soccer's SEATTLE SOUNDERS go at it in an MLS match...but only Bridget pays any real attention.

INT. MUSEUM OF FLIGHT - DAY

Laura, Lakeisha, and Aaliyah pay close attention as A MUSEUM GUIDE shows off the variety of planes on display.

INT. PARAMOUNT THEATER STAGE - DAY

Janie, Jessica Anne, Lakeisha, Laura, Libby, and Lizzy show what they can do as theater organists.

EXT. BOEING FUTURE OF FLIGHT, MUKILTEO, WA - DAY

The Nebraskans look staggered as they approach the world's biggest building in terms of volume.

INT. PRODUCTION FLOOR - DAY

About half the teens pull out cell phones or cameras to get pictures of jets being assembled.

INT. UNDERGROUND PASSAGEWAY, SEATTLE, WA - DAY

A TOUR GUIDE escorts Barbara, Marilyn, and Co.

INT. PARAMOUNT THEATER STAGE - NIGHT

Melody Rose, Nina, Olivia, and Samantha play the theater's Mighty Wurlitzer...then gesture Barbara and Marilyn into playing the organ's keys and stomping its pedals.

END MONTAGE

EXT. MLK FAME COMMUNITY CENTER - DAY

This one's a modern building in a residential neighborhood in the east part of town.

INT. MLK FAME COMMUNITY CENTER MUSIC ROOM - DAY

In an almost-smallish space bordered on one wall by windows, Mackenzie leads THE GIRLS ELLINGTON PROJECT (eighteen female high schoolers from all over the Rainy City area) into...well, a Duke Ellington number.

Where space permits, Barbara, Marilyn, and as many of the Duchesne jazzsters as possible (if not the whole unit) stand and watch...in awe.

Audience members Melody Rose and Lakeisha eye each other.

MELODY ROSE

That's what we're trying to sound like.

LAKEISHA
Tell me about it, Mel.

When the tune ends, the room explodes in applause.

MACKENZIE
(with a goodnatured laugh)
That's it!
(gesturing)
Girls Ellington Project, meet your
sisters in swing and jazz from
Omaha.

The Seattle Eighteen applaud the now-stunned visitors from
the Omaha/Council Bluffs/Bellevue area.

Once the cheering dies down, Ellington Project alto
saxophonist HAYLEY BARTOSZEK (17) points to Barbara.

HAYLEY
We've heard a lot about your band.

Some Duchesne mouths drop.

HAYLEY (CONT'D)
Don't worry...it's all good.

BARBARA
Speakin' of good...we're so honored
and delighted to be in the company
of the first all-female high school
jazz band to compete in national
competitions.

The Nebraskans AD LIB their agreement before they add some
more applause.

MACKENZIE
Barbara, I've got an idea.

Barbara and her band perk up.

MACKENZIE (CONT'D)
Did you all bring your instruments?

Jessica Anne, Aaliyah, Lizzy, and Laura grin.

SAME SCENE - A BIT LATER

Now the Ellington Project members stand alongside Marilyn and
Barbara while Mackenzie directs the Duchesne Academy Jazz
Band...in a space where a pre-1929 upright piano and an
electronic keyboard join the grand piano already in the room.

Mackenzie and the visitors give the Stylistics' "You Are Everything" the same driving beat as Hugh Masekela's "Grazing in the Grass."

Here in the second verse, guitarists Lakeisha and Libby carry the melody for five bars before Bella (on grand piano), Aaliyah (on electronic keyboard), and Laura (on upright piano) follow suit for five bars.

All the while, Melody Rose (on bass guitar) and drummer Hannah keep the beat pumping.

On the chorus, horn players Bridget, Elle, Evelyn, Janie, Jessica Anne, Lizzy, Nina, Olivia, and Samantha jump in; over the next twenty-four bars, the tune grows raucous.

INDIRA MUKERJEA (17), the Project's baritone saxophonist, turns to Barbara and Marilyn.

INDIRA
Interesting selection.

MARILYN
One thing about Mrs. Mikolajczyk:
She likes to get on the road less
traveled...take familiar tunes and
jazz 'em up like that.

Barbara and Indira nod.

BARBARA
Wail, Ah figured: "If Ramsey Lewis
could do that and Grover Washin'ton
Jr. could do that, then why cain't
the Duchesne jazz band?"

Now Lizzy's the soloist; as she riffs on the chorus, she and her trumpet keep the raucousness going for another twenty-four bars.

SAME SCENE - A BIT LATER

As Duchesne's musicians, Marilyn, and Mackenzie watch, Barbara takes over the Girls Ellington Project.

In the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra's "Big Dipper," Barbara strains to guide the whole thing...and the home team strains to get used to the Texan-turned-Nebraskan.

Now "Big Dipper" reaches the alto-baritone passage...but Barbara directs Indira and Hayley into playing each other's parts, with Indira going first!

Mackenzie's mouth drops.

So do those of a few other Project musicians.

Audience members Olivia and Hannah shrug.

OLIVIA

Well, Hannah...that's our Mrs.
Mikolajczyk.

INT. MLK FAME COMMUNITY CENTER HALLWAY - DAY

Mackenzie and Barbara take a slow stroll.

BARBARA

Yeah...Ah know. That's what happens
when you let an algebra teacher
conduct a high school jazz band.

MACKENZIE

Barbara, it's all right.

BARBARA

Mah dad used to be a preacher. In
fact, he had his own show on public-
access cable when Ah was growin' up
in the Metroplex.

Mackenzie looks lost.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

The Dallas/Fort Worth/Arlin'ton
area.

MACKENZIE

Oh.

BARBARA

Anyway...his slogan was: "Be
prepared, for you just don't know
the hour..."

Barbara watches Mackenzie nod.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

Ah guess it works better at the
pulpit than with a high school jazz
band.

MACKENZIE

Speaking of high school...I know you've got Mary Ann Kiefer on your mind. And how she wants to shut the Duchesne band down.

Barbara's mouth flies open.

MACKENZIE (CONT'D)

Well...you said so. On the phone.

Barbara and Mackenzie stop in their tracks.

MACKENZIE (CONT'D)

Just put her out of your mind. Just focus on those sixteen girls.

BARBARA

(nodding)

Speakin' of girls...we wouldn't even be in this hallway if it weren't for Schuyler Ann Scholtz.

MACKENZIE

Who's she?

BARBARA

Wail, she enrolled at Duchesne Academy eight years ago...and she'd played drums ever since she was six.

Mackenzie and Barbara resume their stroll.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

She wanted to form a jazz band over there. But the music teacher we had over there back then, Claire Seavey, kept tailin' her "no."

MACKENZIE

That's all messed up.

BARBARA

Schuyler Ann did everythang right, Mackenzie. She went to a teacher and asked if she could git a jazz band started...but the whole thang ate ol' Schuyler Ann up so much she transferred to another school.

MACKENZIE

Did she play drums there?

BARBARA

Sure did. In fact, she went on to study jazz percussion at Berklee.

MACKENZIE

That's great! That's really great!

BARBARA

You betcha! And Ah've been spendin' the last six years tryin' to make this pay off...with Schuyler Ann in mind.

MACKENZIE

How's Schuyler Ann doing now? Did she become a jazz drummer?

BARBARA

Wail...she's now out there sailin' insurance in the Silicon Valley.

The two band directors stop at a water fountain.

MACKENZIE

I know you love directing that band. I can tell.

Barbara takes a drink from the fountain.

MACKENZIE (CONT'D)

How do you feel about having your band meet three times a week instead of twice a week?

Barbara turns around and eyeballs Mackenzie.

MACKENZIE (CONT'D)

When you add it all up, Barbara, it's all about the students in the band.

BARBARA

You're preachin' to the choir...Ah mean the band.

MACKENZIE

You wanna give your students all the ammunition they need to go out there. Mary Ann's already got all the ammunition she needs.

Mackenzie drinks from the fountain as Barbara nods.

MACKENZIE (CONT'D)

(looks up at Barbara)

You don't want 'em thinking you're
having a midlife crisis, do you?

Barbara's mouth flies open while she points to Mackenzie.

EXT. DUCHESNE ACADEMY, OMAHA, NE - DAY

PEOPLE IN THIN JACKETS walk by on this April Fools' Day.

INT. DUCHESNE OFFICE OF HEAD OF SCHOOL - DAY

Barbara and Marilyn stand across the desk from Mary Ann, who
leans back in her seat.

BARBARA

See, Mary Ann, by havin' our jazz
band rehearse three times a week
instead of the present two times,
we give the band a fightin' chance
at the State Jazz Festival in
Kearney.

MARILYN

When Barbara and I were in Seattle,
we found out the Girls Ellington
Project practices three times a
week.

BARBARA

And that's one of the reasons they
got the chops to be the first all-
female high school jazz band to
compete in national competitions.

MARILYN

Like the one in Savannah, Georgia.

Mary Ann stares at the two teachers...for a few seconds.

MARY ANN

You two are April fooling, aren't
you?

The two music teachers shake their heads sideways.

MARY ANN (CONT'D)

The string ensemble and the band
ensemble meet twice a week.

Marilyn and Barbara shake their heads "yes."

MARY ANN (CONT'D)
 Isn't that good enough for the jazz
 band, too?

Mary Ann receives a smirk from Marilyn.

BARBARA
 Mary Ann Kiefer...would you make
 Terence "Bud" Crawford git in the
 rang with one hand tied behind his
 back?

Duchesne's head of school looks lost.

MARILYN
 (to Mary Ann)
 Okay...would you make Lady Gaga get
 onstage with marbles in her mouth
 so she can't sing...and both hands
 tied behind her back so she can't
 play the piano?

An openmouthed Mary Ann watches Barbara and Marilyn high-five
 each other.

INT. DUCHESNE MUSIC ROOM - DAY

With the same instrumentation as in "Jazz Baby," Barbara and
 the school's jazz band wrap up a Latin-tinged "What a
 Difference a Day Makes." At the end, several teenagers high-
 five each other.

BARBARA
 Now that's cookin' with gas, y'all!

Some musicians look confused.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
 Okay...that's nukin' it, y'all!

Jessica Anne, Janie, and Evelyn nod.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
 Speakin' of nukes...how do y'all
 feel about us havin' rehearsals
 three times a week...Mondays,
 Wednesdays, and Fridays?

Dead silence...for a few moments.

BRIDGET
 Bring it on!

Bridget's remark sets off cheering and thunderous applause from her bandmates and their leader.

Evelyn adds a sigh of relief.

AALIYAH

Ms. McCutcheon already talked it over with some of the members of both choirs...and they told her: "Go for it!"

MELODY ROSE

(nodding at Aaliyah)

She's decided the extra practice session will be in the afternoon.

BARBARA

Aaliyah, Melody Rose, that's great...now here's the not-so-great.

OLIVIA

Uh oh.

BARBARA

We're gonna need to charter a bus to git us out to Kearney and back for the Nebraska State Jazz Festival.

Several young heads nod.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

Mrs. Kiefer told me they don't have any money in the school budget for us to charter a bus...and mah mad money account is all gone.

JANIE

Mrs. Mikolajczyk...what if all sixteen of us pitched in ten dollars apiece?

Janie receives AD LIBBED encouragement from her colleagues.

BARBARA

Janie...that'll help. We're gonna need that. But that'll git us twenty percent of the way there.

JESSICA ANNE

Yeah. That won't even get us to Lincoln.

Some bandmembers look dejected; others show angry looks.

SAMANTHA

Let's see if we can hit up Warren
Buffett--

HANNAH

Let's see if we can hit Mrs. Kiefer
instead--

LAKEISHA

Why don't we hold a car wash?

Sixteen pairs of eyes turn to Lakeisha.

LAKEISHA (CONT'D)

My parents and I shop at the
supermarket at One Hundred Eighth
and Fort...and they let nonprofit
groups raise money by holding car
washes.

As Barbara nods, a few musicians AD LIB their agreement with
Lakeisha's proposal.

BRIDGET

Come on, you guys! Turner's right!
Let's do it!

The music room rings with cheers.

BARBARA

Lakeisha's right...let's do the car
wash.

NINA

Samantha...it's easier than trying
to contact Warren Buffett.

BELLA

(to Hannah)
And it sure beats hitting Mrs.
Kiefer.

Hannah shakes her head "yes."

SERIES OF SHOTS

EXT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

Buckets of water at the ready, a hose nearby, and sponges and/or washcloths in hand, Barbara, Greg, and Duchesne's sixteen jazzwomen stand in anticipation of the first dirty vehicle to pull up.

Shelby, in her 1990 Pontiac, becomes the first customer.

Greg, Barbara, and four bandmembers wash Sandra's 2017 Dodge Durango SUV.

Four more musicians work on Gordon's 2006 Ford Taurus.

Dean pulls up in his 2015 BMW...and four additional Duchesne jazz players work on it.

The remaining academy quartet wash the dirt off Sherryll's 2016 Lexus.

Half the group washes Dave's 2013 Ford Explorer...while the other half cleans Patti's 2014 Ford Explorer.

When Mary Kay pulls up in her four-door 2010 Chevy pickup, as many musicians as possible put their sponges on it.

Same thing happens when Marilyn's 2012 Subaru Outback reaches the throng.

Chuck arrives in his 2014 Toyota Camry...and some in Barbara's Bunch clean it up.

Barbara and Greg go at it on Chip's 2009 Honda Accord.

At the end, Chip and Chuck hand Barbara a sizable check each...and set off a wild, wet celebration.

END SERIES OF SHOTS

EXT. DUCHESNE ACADEMY - DAY

A charter bus rests near the front entrance...where Barbara, Greg, Marilyn, and Anne Marie stand with fifteen musicians.

A worried Barbara counts heads.

Just outside the front entrance, Aretha gabs with Libby...who totes a full violin case in one hand, a full banjo case in the other hand, and a full guitar case on her back.

LIBBY

Sorry...Bridget and Janie and I
aren't gonna be able to do Field
Day.

(moves toward bus)

We're all going to Kearney.

ARETHA

YOU'RE GONNA REGRET THIS FOR THE
REST OF YOUR LIFE!!

LIBBY

I don't know that, Aretha...but I
know this: Have a great Field Day.

Aretha seethes as Libby reaches the bus.

At the bus, Libby's arrival triggers boisterous cheers.

EXT. INTERSTATE 80, NEAR YORK, NE - CHARTER BUS - DAY

The bus tools westward at a smart pace.

INT. CHARTER BUS - DAY

The sixteen girls, three women, and lone man ride in comfort
and high spirits. Some passengers gaze at the fertile (and
not-so-fertile) scenery.

EXT. KEARNEY HIGH SCHOOL, KEARNEY, NE - DAY

The bus pulls alongside a gleaming, sprawling building
straight out of the Obama years.

INT. KEARNEY HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - DAY

The Omaha entourage sits in the middle seats of this plush
space, where A JAZZ BAND from Omaha Elkhorn South fires up a
big-band standard...and impresses A CAPACITY CROWD.

Lizzy turns to Jessica Anne and Elle, who sit alongside her.

LIZZY

That's one of the two bands from
Elkhorn South.

ELLE

What the...

JESSICA ANNE
Lizzy's right. At Elkhorn South,
they turn out jazz musicians like
Trump turns out...interesting
stories.

LIZZY
We're not in the same
classification as Elkhorn
South...they're in Class AA.

Elle and Jessica Anne nod at Lizzy.

LIZZY (CONT'D)
We're in Class A. We don't have to
play until eight thirty tomorrow
night.

Elle's is a look of dejection.

ELLE
I knew it.

JESSICA ANNE
No, Elle...it doesn't have anything
to do with talent.

LIZZY
(to Elle)
All it means is that Elkhorn
South's got more musicians than
Duchesne has students. Overall.

JESSICA ANNE
Just like in sports.

Now Elle breathes relief...until she stares at the judges'
table in front of the stage, where arbiters Ted, Sonny, and
BOB KITTERMASTER (60s) stretch their arms.

In the audience, Evelyn and Samantha watch the judges...and
stare openmouthed at Janie.

SAMANTHA
Janie...guess who this year's
judges are?

EVELYN
(pointing at Janie)
Yeah. Sonny and Cher...I mean Sonny
and Ted.

SAMANTHA
From the Great Plains Jazz
Festival.

That Elkhorn South jazz band brings its tune to an end...and triggers strong applause.

JANIE
Relax, you two. It's just like Mr.
Currivan says in the locker room:
"Let's show 'em we've got the
chops!"

Evelyn nods, busts a karate chop, then resumes her applause.

EXT. KEARNEY HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Anne Marie, Barbara, Greg, and Marilyn stand between a 1910-1929 upright player piano, a 1960-1979 electric organ, and the front entrance.

The foursome watch a 2019 Nissan pull into the lot. After the car moves into a parking space, Shanice leaves the driver's seat and approaches the three teachers and spouse.

An openmouthed Barbara runs toward Shanice.

BARBARA
Shanice Gibson! Am Ah so glad to
see you!

Shanice and Barbara hug as if it's Old Home Week.

SHANICE
Hey, when I found out my favorite
all-female high school jazz band
from Nebraska was playing here in
Kearney, I knew I couldn't miss
this.

Barbara and Shanice walk toward the rest of the group.

SHANICE (CONT'D)
What's with the old piano and the
organ?

BARBARA
Wail...Ah promised the Nebraska
State Bandmasters Association we'd
brang an extra coupla keyboards.
And besides, Ah found out on
Facebook that Kearney High's doin'
"The Music Man" next year.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

(gesturing)

Want you to meet mah husband Greg.

Greg, Marilyn, and Anne Marie shake hands with Shanice.

GREG

Shanice, it's nice to meet you.
Barbara's told me so much about
you.

Shanice nods.

GREG (CONT'D)

Don't worry...it's all good.

ANNE MARIE

Shanice, I'm Anne Marie
Pikiell...one of Barbara's fellow
math teachers at Duchesne. And
Marilyn Monroe McCutcheon's the
academy's head of the music
department.

MARILYN

(to Shanice)

We're getting ready to move these
oldies-but-goodies into the
auditorium...and...

SHANICE

It's all good, Marilyn. I'm glad to
help out.

(chuckling)

And it isn't "The Music Man" if
Amaryllis has to play her crosshand
piece on an electronic keyboard.

Greg smiles as he eyeballs the four women.

GREG

Well, that's it. We can do it.

Anne Marie slowly nods.

GREG (CONT'D)

Between the five of us, we've got
the strength of two NFL players.

ANNE MARIE

Greg...do you mean offensive
linemen, middle linebackers, or
kick returners?

Barbara and Shanice burst into laughter.

INT. KEARNEY HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

The desks stand against one wall, the door is closed, and the Duchesne Academy Jazz Band forms something akin to a circle.

Today, the Duchesne Sixteen wear a vast variety of clothing...from T-shirts and jeans to Libby's basketball uniform to Janie's volleyball uniform to dresses to gowns to men's suits to tuxedos.

LIBBY

I mean...if Aretha Adams is gonna keep calling us a bunch of bleeding gums, how do you feel...we might as well own it!

Several bandmembers stare at Libby.

SAMANTHA

This reminds me of that scene in "The Longest Yard."

EVELYN

Which one? The one with Burt Reynolds...or the one--

SAMANTHA

I never saw the one with Adam Sandler.

MELODY ROSE

Anyway...Janie's right. We've got the chops to bring this thing home and get Mrs. Kiefer off our--

The door opens...and Barbara and Marilyn (both look tired) enter the classroom.

LAURA

Please...you're welcome to join our circle...ellipse...egg.

Some of the musicians make room for the two instructors.

LIZZY

Mrs. Mikolajczyk...we found out about the conversation you and Mrs. Kiefer had about shutting the band down if we didn't do well.

EVELYN

Yeah...Ms. McCutcheon brought it up in choir.

Marilyn slowly nods.

BARBARA

Wait a minute, y'all...Ah didn't
brang it up because Ah just didn't
wanna put any more pressure on you.

Janie, Libby, and Lizzy look amused.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

You're under enough pressure as it
is...just bein' students.

Some jazzwomen nod; others just grin.

AALIYAH

(gesturing)

Don't worry, Mrs. Mikolajczyk!
We've got this! We're gonna be all
right!

Aaliyah's colleagues AD LIB their agreement; most...then all
of them applaud. Marilyn and Barbara join in, too.

BARBARA

Awraht, y'all...let's all hold
hands!

The band and the teachers hold hands.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

One...two...three...

FULL BAND

BLEEDING GUMS!!

Barbara does a doubletake.

INT. KEARNEY HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

Armed with a new nickname, Duchesne's jazz band roars through
Isaac Hayes' "Be Yourself."

Hannah's brief drum fill leads to three notes from rhythm
guitarist Libby and organist Aaliyah...which trigger the
tune's driving basic melody.

In the first eight bars of basic melody, tenor saxophonist
Jessica Anne plays "calls" while trumpeter Lizzy does one-
note "responses."

Underneath, Aaliyah, Hannah, and Libby gain help: Lakeisha adds wah-wah lead guitar, bass guitarist Melody Rose plays double time, and Bella (on grand piano) and Laura (on upright piano) fill in the gaps.

The upright's player mechanism has been dismantled and set off to the side. Plus: The hammers are exposed.

A CAPACITY CROWD watches the Bleeding Gums (and Marilyn catches it on a camcorder)...while Bob, Sonny, and Ted somewhat quietly discuss the band from the judges' table.

BOB

Ted, you told me they were from an all-girls' Catholic school. Why aren't they wearing uniforms up there, like the other bands--

TED

Bob...they've been wearing school uniforms all year long. This is their break--

SONNY

You guys wanna give this a break?

Ted and Bob shoot Sonny looks of bewilderment.

Meanwhile, saxophonists Bridget and Nina; trombonists Elle, Evelyn, and Samantha; and trumpeters Janie and Olivia join Lizzy and Jessica Anne for the next eight bars.

Libby's three notes bring "Be Yourself" back to Jessica Anne's and Lizzy's call-and-response work. Twelve bars later, all the horns weigh in for an eight-bar run.

Aaliyah's one-bar organ line ends things...and puts Nina and her alto sax in the driver's seat.

During Nina's twenty-bar solo, TWO TEENAGE SPECTATORS snicker...but Shanice wags a finger at them.

SHANICE

Don't snicker if you can't back it up.

The teenage spectators cover their mouths in embarrassment.

SAME SCENE - SEVERAL MINUTES LATER

Aaliyah takes to the grand piano...where her arpeggio launches "Star Dust."

Libby (on violin) leads the band through the ballad's first sixteen bars. During Libby's solo, Aaliyah plays "responses" every two bars.

Halfway through the violin solo, Bob looks fit to be tied.

BOB

(to Sonny and Ted)

That figures. They'd have to bring a violin to the Nebraska State Jazz Festival.

SONNY

I guess you've never heard of Joe Venuti.

TED

Only the first great violinist in jazz history.

Meanwhile, Melody Rose (now on bass fiddle) plucks out a series of one-note patterns...and Bella provides a harmonic continuum with her organ work.

At solo's end, Aaliyah, Bella, and Melody Rose vamp...to give Libby time to set her violin and its bow aside and strap her electric guitar back on.

When Libby puts her guitar back on, rhythm guitarist Evelyn strums a single note...and Hannah hi-hats it on drums.

As the rhythm section jams behind her, Libby stuns the crowd (judges, too) with a bluesy thirty-two-bar guitar solo.

Libby keeps it up when Samantha, Olivia, Nina, Lizzy, Jessica Anne, Janie, Elle, and Bridget (on their usual instruments) jump in for the thirty-two-bar passage's second go-'round.

Libby's B.B. King-style solo earns her an ovation.

In the next set of thirty-two, Lakeisha (on soprano sax) and Laura (on toy sax) team up to lead...before Evelyn moves over to the old upright to trade riffs with Aaliyah (still on grand piano) for thirty-two.

And Bob breathes a sigh of relief.

SAME SCENE - SEVERAL MINUTES LATER

Aaliyah takes over at the ancient upright...to deliver a treacly seventeen-bar intro (a slowed-down first verse) to Carrie Jacobs Bond's "A Perfect Day."

Aaliyah's arpeggio ends the intro; Hannah (with her hi-hatting on drums) and Laura (who modulates on organ) muscle their way into the tune...and turn it into a barnburner along the lines of Jimmy Smith's "The Champ."

Lakeisha (on guitar) and Melody Rose (on bass fiddle) team up with Laura, Hannah, and Aaliyah to give the seventeen-bar passage a torrid second go-'round.

Bella (on vibes) and Libby (on banjo) jump in to add a countermelody for the next twenty-two bars.

The next twenty-two-bar passage features horn players Bridget, Elle, Evelyn, Janie, Jessica Anne, Lizzy, Nina, Olivia, and Samantha...who bring raucousness to the tune.

Bridget takes "A Perfect Day's" first solo; her seventeen-bar spree on baritone sax gives way to Janie's seventeen bars on a muted trumpet.

During Janie's solo, Samantha, Elle, and Evelyn eyeball each other...and then Elle delivers the first trombone solo in Bleeding Gums history.

Elle shows she's got the groove during her seventeen-bar turn...so Barbara gestures Elle into another verse.

Elle's solo draws heartfelt applause.

At the judges' table, Sonny shows pleasant surprise.

Laura glissandos her way into the lead...and goes wild for seventeen bars of her own. She takes "A Perfect Day" into a new key...and earns audience adulation.

Hannah takes the next solo...a twenty-two-bar romp where her playing gains strength with each bar (and triggers applause).

Melody Rose sneaks back into the number; eight bars later, Aaliyah takes over to deliver seventeen bars where she gives the ancient upright's keys a real workout...and sets off additional applause.

Bella, Lakeisha, Laura, and Libby come back in for twenty-two bars of countermelody before the horn players bring the wildness back for their own twenty-two-bar set.

Hannah grabs the spotlight for four bars before the whole band brings this barnburner to a wild, rousing one-note end.

The auditorium erupts in boisterous applause...while onstage, Barbara and her musicians whoop it up.

SAME SCENE - AN HOUR LATER

Bob, Sonny, and Ted stand onstage. Each man wields a mike.

BOB
 (into his mike)
 Ladies and gentlemen, thank you all
 for coming to this year's Nebraska
 State Jazz Festival! Give
 yourselves a hand!

The crowd does just that.

SONNY
 (into his own mike)
 Now it's awards time...and we're
 gonna start out with the sections.
 If your group is called, please
 stand in place, and we'll recognize
 you.

Sonny turns to Ted.

TED
 (into own mike)
 This year's best overall wind
 section...Elkhorn South Jazz One!

In the audience, Lizzy, Olivia, and Janie flash knowing nods as the WIND SECTION from that first Elkhorn South jazz outfit rises as one...to thunderous applause.

BOB
 Best overall rhythm section...one
 of two first-year entries in this
 year's festival...Omaha...Duchesne!

Bella, Aaliyah, Laura, Libby, Lakeisha, Melody Rose, and Hannah show surprise as they stand up under enormous, heartfelt applause.

MELODY ROSE
 (to Evelyn)
 Stand up! You played guitar and
 piano on "Star Dust!"

The kudos continue while a shrugging Evelyn rises.

Audience members Anne Marie, Barbara, Greg, Marilyn, and Shanice eyeball each other.

GREG
 Who was the other newcomer?

MARILYN

Wynot.

ANNE MARIE

Why not what?

SHANICE

Wynot High School. They were in the girls' state basketball tournament.

Shanice watches four heads nod.

BARBARA

They've got fifty-three students in grades nine through twelve...and half of them showed up and played tonight...Ah mean almost half.

MARILYN

You talk about dedication!

Back onstage, the three judges, microphones still in hand, switch places.

SONNY

Now, ladies and gentlemen, we come to the outstanding solo awards. If your name is called, please come up to the stage.

TED

This year's outstanding sax solo was played by...Dylan Vanden Boom, Elkhorn South!

As the crowd cheers, DYLAN VANDEN BOOM (16) struts from his place in the audience onto the stage, where he shakes the judges' hands and poses for photos.

BOB

Our outstanding trombone soloist is...Harmony Wang, Wynot High School!

Sonny's mouth flies open in delight when HARMONY WANG (17) walks from her spot in the cheering audience to the stage, where he, Ted, and Bob shake her hand and pose for pictures.

SONNY

Now we come to the outstanding rhythm solo...and we have...a flat-footed tie!

Bob and Ted nod.

SONNY (CONT'D)
Our winners are...Aaliyah Clayton
and Elizabeth French...both from
Omaha Duchesne!

The audience cheers itself hoarse when Libby and Aaliyah come to the stage to shake hands with the three judges and pose for the cameras, camcorders, and cell phones.

In the audience, Bella looks at Hannah and Olivia.

BELLA
One down and one to go.

SAME SCENE - A BIT LATER

Ted, Sonny, and Bob remain onstage, mikes in hand.

BOB
And now, ladies and gentlemen, to
tell you about this year's class
awards, let's bring up the
president of the Nebraska State
Bandmasters Association...Richard
Rogodzinski!

The judges and the audience watch RICHARD ROGODZINSKI (50s) jump out of his seat in the audience to go onstage...where he grabs a microphone.

RICHARD
(into his mike)
Thank you, Bob.

Bob nods as Richard addresses the audience.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
Folks, this has been quite a
festival...and you made it quite a
festival! Give yourselves a hand!

Richard watches the crowd jubilate.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
Well, folks, let's get to it...the
bands that received a superior
rating. If your band's name is
called, stand in place and we'll
recognize you.

Ted hands Richard a note card; the latter grabs it with his free hand.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
 In the middle school
 classification...Elkhorn Valley
 View!

THE BAND from Omaha's Elkhorn Valley View Middle School rises in jubilation...and under boisterous cheers.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
 We had a Class D entry this
 year...and what a job they did.
 Let's hear it for Wynot High
 School!

Harmony and HER WYNOT BANDMATES rise from their seats and soak up the applause.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
 In Class B...a superior rating went
 to...Pierce High School!

PIERCE'S JAZZ BAND jumps up to hearty kudos.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
 Now we get to Class A...where, this
 year, only three entries showed
 up...

The Duchesne students and teachers look antsy...as do Shanice and Greg.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
 Only one of the three Class A bands
 earned a superior rating this
 year...and that band didn't even
 exist at this time last year...

Slowly but surely, one by one, Barbara and her sixteen musicians rise from their seats. Marilyn catches it all on her camcorder.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
 Let's hear it for the band from
 Omaha's...Duchesne Academy!

The place erupts in pandemonium while the Bleeding Gums high-five each other...and Barbara high-fives those who flank her.

Anne Marie breaks out her cell phone and turns to Greg.

ANNE MARIE

I'm gonna text Sandra the good news. You gonna text Mary Ann?

GREG

Are you kidding? That's one cookie jar I don't wanna raid!

Anne Marie nods.

SAME SCENE - STILL LATER

Bob, Sonny, Ted, and Richard still hold their mikes; the four men eyeball each other onstage before Richard turns to the happy audience.

RICHARD

We've got one more piece of business to conduct before this year's Nebraska State Jazz Festival goes into the books...and that's to hand out the Sweepstakes Trophy.

TED

Our overall third-place winner...Millard West High School, under the direction of Blake Wanek! Come on up!

BLAKE WANEK (30s) and HIS JAZZ BAND from Omaha Millard West leave their seats in the cheering audience and head for the stage, where Bob sets his mike aside to hand Blake a third-place trophy.

BLAKE

(into Ted's mike)

Thank you...it's been a pleasure to be here.

Bob retrieves his mike and gestures Blake and Co. into staying onstage while the applause resumes.

BOB

This year's second-place winner...Elkhorn South Jazz One, under the direction of Corey Elliott! Come on up here!

Dylan and HIS OMAHA ELKHORN SOUTH JAZZ ONE BANDMATES, as well as director COREY ELLIOTT (40s), move from the shocked-but-still-cheering audience to the stage.

In the crowd, Lizzy turns to whoever flanks her.

LIZZY

I thought they were gonna nail it
again.

As they stand on the opposite end of the stage from the Millard West group, most of Dylan's fellow musicians (to say nothing of Corey) look stunned.

Still, Corey and colleagues try to look grateful as Sonny puts down his mike and hands Corey a second-place trophy.

COREY

(into Bob's mike)

Thank you so very much...and you
can bet we'll be back next year!

Sonny grabs his mike and addresses a buzzing, cheering crowd.

SONNY

You've got it, everybody...this has
been a year of surprises. And our
biggest surprise is right at the
very top.

Members of Omaha Duchesne's, Pierce's, and Wynot's jazz bands eyeball each other.

SONNY (CONT'D)

Not only is our Sweepstakes Trophy
winner a first-year entry in the
Nebraska State Jazz Festival...this
year's overall champion opened up
lots of eyes...including mine.

Fingers cross all over the auditorium...teeth bite lips...

SONNY (CONT'D)

I keep hearing it...I keep seeing
it on TV and on the Internet...and
they're right.

Richard hoists the big trophy and goes to Sonny's side.

SONNY (CONT'D)

The future of jazz is female...so I
want all of you to congratulate
this year's overall champion...

The Duchesne Sixteen look at each other.

SONNY (CONT'D)

Under the direction of Barbara Mikolajczyk, the jazz band from Omaha Duchesne Academy!

The crowd goes wild as Barbara and the Duchesne Academy Jazz Band run toward the stage...where the seventeen of 'em stand front and center.

SONNY (CONT'D)

(to Barbara and band)

Welcome to the neighborhood...all seventeen of you...you help make it so much better.

A stunned Elle gestures her gratitude for Sonny's remark.

Richard joins Sonny, the winning band, and its director. He hands the big trophy to Barbara and retrieves his own mike.

RICHARD

Barbara, congratulations to you and the Duchesne band...all the years we've had this festival, we've never, ever had a band as versatile as yours.

Richard points his mike at Barbara.

BARBARA

(into Richard's mike)

Wail, thank you so very much...it's just that the real credit goes out to these sixteen fine musicians...fine students...fine young women...fine human bein's.

Sixteen young sets of eyes from Omaha Duchesne light up...especially those of Aaliyah, who accepts the Sweepstakes Trophy from Barbara.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

Wail, it's true! They did all the heavy liftin'. And it's such a pleasure to work with these sixteen fine people.

Richard hands his mike to Barbara, who turns to her band's sixteen members.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

And Ah'm lookin' forward to all
seventeen of us comin' back next
year to slay us some more dragons
and grillin' 'em up real good and
havin' a real cookout. Whaddya say?

The Gums cheer themselves hoarse...as does the audience.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

Now, Richard, while Ah've got the
mike...let's hear you name five
professional female jazz
instrumentalists...livin' ones.

Richard flashes that deer-in-the-headlights look.

EXT. BIG OLE'S STEAKHOUSE, PAXTON, NE - DAY

The charter bus rests in the parking lot of a major tourist
attraction disguised as a restaurant off Interstate 80 and
west of Kearney.

INT. BIG OLE'S STEAKHOUSE DINING ROOM - DAY

Scores of big-game trophies team up with scores of photos to
dominate the walls of a space that also features tables for
foursomes in the middle.

The room features a 1900-19 upright piano, too.

Anne Marie, Barbara, Greg, Marilyn, Shanice, and Duchesne's
sixteen jazz musicians occupy those middle tables, where they
feast like champions.

MARILYN

Shanice...your husband missed a
great, great outing. He would've
had a ball with us.

SHANICE

Tell me about it, Marilyn! That's
what he gets for being a detective
with the Omaha Police.

GREG

Yeah...he's helping to solve the
case of the budding rapper who got
killed out in Millard.

SHANICE

So he did get involved in music
this weekend after all.

Between bites, Anne Marie scrolls pics on her cell phone.

ANNE MARIE

(to Barbara)

I still can't get over those outfits you and Greg and the band wore for "Conge."

BARBARA

You wait 'til next year, Anne Marie.

GREG

(to Anne Marie)

What can you say when you marry somebody who rocks a suit better than you do?

Greg and the tablemates around him chuckle.

BARBARA

Thanks, Greg...but you're no slouch yourself.

Aaliyah and Bella rise from their table(s) to inspect the old piano...and Laura leaves her table to talk to Barbara.

Laura backs off and returns to her table when Barbara's cell phone RINGS.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

(into her phone)

Hi there. This is Barbara.

INT. LIVING ROOM AT KIEFERS' HOUSE, OMAHA, NE - DAY

Mary Ann, cell phone against her ear, sits alongside Ty on the sofa in this modestly-furnished living room.

A SPORTS SHOW plays on the couple's big-screen TV.

MARY ANN

Hi, Barbara. It's Mary Ann Kiefer, and I got your message...and I've got just one thing to say.

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

BARBARA

Far when ready, Mary Ann.

MARY ANN

Congratulations!

BARBARA

Thank you so very, very much. This all couldn't've happened without those sixteen hungry musicians. Ah mean, they make our school proud.

MARY ANN

Actually...I've got some more things to say.

BARBARA

Shoot your shot.

Ty grabs the remote to MUTE the sound.

MARY ANN

All you wanted to do was fill a void in Duchesne's activities. For six years, you stuck to your guns. You wouldn't give up...and now, Duchesne's got the best high school jazz band in the State of Nebraska.

BARBARA

We just didn't wanna settle for less, that's for doggone shore.

MARY ANN

Just goes to show you...heads of school can be wrong, too.

BARBARA

Wail, we're all human bein's...and we need to be helpin' each other. Not fightin' each other.

Bella and Aaliyah remove the old upright's music rack...

MARY ANN

Speaking of helping each other...we're gonna increase the academy's music budget to include the Bleeding Gums. You've earned it! I'm proud of all of you!

...and set it off to the side.

BARBARA

That's great, Mary Ann! Thanks a bunch!

MARY ANN

Thank you and the band! See you tomorrow...all of you get back to Omaha safely!

BARBARA

We will!

MARY ANN

Before I get off, I wanna leave you with five names: Grace Kelly, Gunhild Carling, Bria Skonberg, Terri Lyne Carrington, and Swahili Wilson.

Barbara's and Ty's mouths hang open.

TY

You mean Esperanza Spalding!

BARBARA

Wail, Mary Ann, you got four outa five...take care. Happy trails.

MARY ANN

Happy trails to you, too. Bye.

INT. BIG OLE'S STEAKHOUSE DINING ROOM, PAXTON, NE - DAY

As Barbara puts her cell phone away, Laura, Aaliyah, and Bella approach her.

BELLA

Mrs. Mikolajczyk...is there enough time for all sixteen of us to play the piano here?

While Shanice, Greg, and Marilyn look excited, Anne Marie looks flummoxed.

LAURA

Just wanted to see the old "Keyboard Kid," Bella, jam with the new "Keyboard Kid," Aaliyah.

BARBARA

Me, too! Go for it!

Anne Marie wags a finger at Barbara.

ANNE MARIE

We've all gotta get back on the bus in an hour, don't we?

AALIYAH

Don't worry, Ms. Pikiell...it's all good. After all, we remember what happened the last time we visited a steakhouse!

Barbara and Greg bust out in laughter.

Meanwhile, Laura returns to her seat...and Aaliyah and Bella walk back to the old upright.

FREEZE FRAME as Bella and Aaliyah take seats at the piano.

FADE OUT.

THE END