

The Contest

Scott Joshua Alexander James
Hurley

Master of Arts by Research

University of York

Theatre, Film and Television

September 2017

Abstract

The Contest is a teen musical which follows three scholarship candidates, principally a candidate called Alex, at an elite music school. The school has a very traditionalist approach to music but Alex has a passion for musical theatre, so much so that he envisages key moments of his life as musical sequences.

As Alex's alternative tastes are noticed by teachers and fellow pupils, as well as his parents, he faces backlash against the traditionalist sensibilities. This is further intensified by Alex's own struggle with his sexuality, and his reluctance to admit it.

Alex meets fellow candidates Tom and Sarah. Tom harbours a love of rock music, as well as a crush on Alex, whereas Sarah is competitive and has a strong desire to win the contest, for which there can only be one winner.

As the contest become more intense and the final concert performance comes closer the feelings and secrets of the candidates are revealed, and Alex must choose between hiding his feelings and dreams, or realising them.

N.B The musical score for the songs is not included in this draft, however, the style of music is described within the action. Because of this the meter of the verses may not flow as expected.

Contents

Abstract	.....	page 3
Contents	.....	page 5
Acknowledgments	.....	page 7
Declaration	.....	page 9
Screenplay	.....	page 11
References	.....	page 105

Acknowledgements

There are a number of people who have supported me throughout this project I would like to thank. Principally, I would like to thank Simon van der Borgh. Not only has Simon been a helpful and inspiring supervisor and teacher, but Simon has also given me the strength to continue writing when it was the last thing I wanted to do, and to reflect my own hopes and fears within the text itself. This immeasurable contribution has not only allowed me to write the screenplay I submit, but has enabled me to grow stronger and more confident as a writer and as a person.

I would also like to thank Andrew Adams, Charlie Menzies, Jack Wallis and Miho Yeap for their feedback, honest criticism, and support throughout the last year.

Finally, I would like to thank John and Hillary. John and Hillary provided crucial assistance which enabled me to complete this course

This script is for Ben.

Declaration

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, University. All sources are acknowledged as References.

THE CONTEST(W.T)

Written by

Scott Hurley

Music and Lyrics by
Scott Hurley

Working Draft Two

EXT. GATE, DRIVEWAY - DAY

A long country road winds up to a large iron gate, which sits at the edge of a wood.

A 1980s black Mercedes drives down the road.

INT. MERCEDES - CONTINUOUS

ARTHUR (45) drives the car while MARY (45) reads a large road atlas. They both wear formal attire, a black suit for Arthur and red dress for Mary.

At the back of the car sits ALEX (16), dressed in school uniform. He's nothing impressive; short for his age with curly black hair and thick glasses.

He pours over a full orchestral score for "Company" by Stephen Sondheim.

ARTHUR

Alex?

Alex reads the score.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Alex!

Alex looks up.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Put that away, please. This audition is critical and I want you focused.

He reluctantly closes the score and puts it in the seat pocket in front of him.

EXT. GATE, DRIVEWAY - CONTINUOUS

The car stops in front of the gate.

A RED VOLVO 240 is driving towards the gate in the distance.

INT. MERCEDES - CONTINUOUS

ARTHUR

Mary, would you?

He gestures towards an intercom system on the gatepost. Mary smiles, puts down the map and gets out of the car.

EXT. GATE, DRIVEWAY - CONTINUOUS

Mary walks towards the intercom, her heels CRUNCHING against the gravel.

The red Volvo stops behind the Mercedes. Mary presses the intercom system.

No response.

A HONK comes out of the Volvo. Mary turns around, startled.

MARY
Yes, one minute.

She turns around and is about to press the intercom button again when a DRAWLING FEMALE VOICE comes out of the speaker unit.

RECEPTIONIST (V.O.)
Hello, Ravenscar College reception,
how can I help?

MARY
I have Alex Stanley here for his
audition.

RECEPTIONIST (V.O.)
Proceed.

Mary gets back into the car just as the gate begins to open.

INT. MERCEDES - CONTINUOUS

As Alex watches the gate open MUSIC BEGINS TO FADE UP. The sound of a REPETITIOUS BASS PIZZICATO.

INT. GATE, DRIVEWAY - CONTINUOUS

The cars drive through the gate into

INT. WOODS, DRIVEWAY - CONTINUOUS

The cars pass rows of old oak trees.

INT. MERCEDES - CONTINUOUS

Arthur adjusts the front mirror so he can see Alex in it. As the MUSIC FADES UP he takes a breath.

ARTHUR
 NOW ALEX, WE DON'T WANT YOU TO BE
 NERVOUS./

Mary turns around in her seat to face him.

MARY
 NO, ALEX, WE CERTAINLY DON'T WANT
 YOU NERVOUS./

Alex looks out of the window, embarrassed by his parents
 attempting words of comfort.

ARTHUR
 A GENERATION OF STANLEYS HAVE COME
 HERE AND WE THINK./

MARY
 YOU FIT THE BILL, more or less,
 DARLING, YOU SHOULD BE FINE.

Arthur nods.

ARTHUR
 BUT I CANNOT STRESS, SON, HOW MUCH
 I THINK YOU/NEED TO IMPRESS, SON,
 AND BEAT THE CROWD.

Mary puts her hand on Alex's knee.

MARY
 TO GET SECOND BEST, SON, THAT'S
 SIMPLY NOT YOU AND/FAILURE HERE
 CANNOT BE ALLOWED.

As Alex looks out the window the trees give way and the car
 moves out of the woods.

EXT. PLAYING FIELDS - CONTINUOUS

The car is now in an enormous valley.

In the centre of the valley is Ravenscar College, a proud
 country house looming over the trimmed sports fields.

A GRAND MUSICAL INSTRUMENTAL PLAYS as Alex looks out of the
 car, wide eyed.

The music drops down as Alex sings to himself.

ALEX
 I CAN'T BELIEVE I'M HERE AT LAST/
 YEARS OF TRAINING MAKE SENSE NOW.

INT. MERCEDES - CONTINUOUS

Alex picks up a folder of scores and opens one up.

ALEX
JUST KEEP IT COOL, DON'T THINK TOO
FAST/I'VE GOT TO WIN THEM OVER
SOMEHOW.

EXT. CAR PARK - CONTINUOUS

The Mercedes joins the ranks of other upmarket cars in the carpark.

Arthur and Mary open their car doors simultaneously and swoop out of the car.

Mary opens Alex's door and pulls him out of the car.

Arthur puts his arm around Alex and walks him towards the school as STUDENTS walk out of the doors and mill around the front lawn.

ARTHUR
TAKE A STAND/YOU'RE GONNA BE
GRAND/YOU'VE WORKED YOUR WHOLE LIFE
FOR THIS./

Mary walks beside them.

MARY
YOU'RE A STAR IN THE MAKING AND
(no, I'm not faking)/I AM SURE THAT
YOU CAN'T BE A MISS.

STUDENTS
NO, YOU CERTAINLY CAN'T BE A MISS!

The students fall into formation around Alex as Mary and Arthur join them in a dance sequence centred around Alex.

ARTHUR/MARY/STUDENTS
FAILURE'S NO LONGER AN OPTION,/

ALEX
IT'S TIME TO PROVE WHAT I CAN DO,/

ARTHUR/MARY/STUDENTS
WE KNOW YOU'LL IMPRESS THEM TODAY.
ALEX (CONT'D)
I HAVE TO IMPRESS THEM TODAY.

Alex begins to walk towards the school door.

The formation moves behind him, acting as very slick backup dancers to his very cautious walk.

ARTHUR/MARY/STUDENTS
IF YOU DON'T WANT YOUR THINGS TO BE
AUCTIONED./

ALEX
AFTER EVERYTHING THAT I'VE BEEN
THROUGH./

ARTHUR/MARY/STUDENTS
WE SUGGEST THAT YOU FIND A
WAY.

ALEX (CONT'D)
I CAN FINALLY FIND MY OWN
WAY.

Arthur, Mary and Alex enter the

INT. RECEPTION - CONTINUOUS

The MUSIC CONTINUES TO UNDERSCORE.

A RECEPTIONIST (35) sits behind a large desk looking through files.

Mary walks up to her and speaks in time with the music.

MARY
Hello, how'r'ya doing it's nice to
see you./We're here because Alex is
here to be a new/Student he signed
up for the summer contest/

Mary pulls Alex to the desk.

MARY (CONT'D)
And well we're convinced he's going
to be the best.

The receptionist ticks a name off her file. She also speaks in time.

RECEPTIONIST
Okay, that's just fine just wait
through that door/You've come just
in time he's expected at four.

The trio walk through a door at the back of the reception into

INT. MAIN HALL - CONTINUOUS

A large, wood-panelled hall. A grand flight of stairs climb up onto a mezzanine level above. There are a series of doors leading off the hall. Outside one is a sign which reads "Auditions".

Students pour onto the mezzanine and into the hall as they perform one more HALF TIME chorus.

ARTHUR/MARY/STUDENTS
FAILURE'S NO LONGER AN OPTION, /

ALEX
I CAN'T BELIEVE I'M HERE AT LAST, /

The trio approach the door to the audition room. The students falling into formation behind them.

ARTHUR/MARY/STUDENTS
WE KNOW YOU'LL IMPRESS THEM TODAY. /

ALEX
YEARS OF TRAINING MAKE SENSE NOW. /

ARTHUR/MARY/STUDENTS
IF YOU DON'T WANT YOUR THINGS TO BE
AUCTIONED /

ALEX
JUST KEEP IT COOL, DON'T THINK TOO
FAST,

ARTHUR/MARY/STUDENTS
WE SUGGEST THAT YOU FIND A
WAY.

ALEX (CONT'D)
I CAN FINALLY FIND MY OWN
WAY.

On the final note all the students raise their arms to the ceiling.

Alex turns around, THE MUSIC HAS GONE and the musical fantasy is over. Students walk to their next lessons. Mary beams.

MARY
Well, in you go.

Alex walks through the door.

INT. AUDITION ROOM - DAY

A grand piano takes up most of this windowless, sound-proofed, room.

Three teachers, MR BRACKTON (60), MISS JOAN (45) and MR DATE (50) sit behind a table taking notes.

Alex is sitting behind the piano, PLAYING CLASSICAL MUSIC to the panel. His piano skills are impressive but the music lacks expression and he looks almost bored.

He FINISHES THE PIECE and Mr Brackton looks up from his notes.

BRACKTON

Well, Alex, you come with a glowing recommendation from Portreight Prep but while your playing is competent I wonder: where is its heart?

Alex shuffles uncomfortably.

DATE

This year we're inviting John Standerwick of the Royal Phil' to judge and we want the three candidates we can present to him to show more than just technical proficiency.

Miss Joan looks through Alex's resumé.

JOAN

Is there anything else that you can give us that perhaps means a little more to you?

Alex shuffles again.

ALEX

Well, I- I can actually compose.

BRACKTON

A composer?

ALEX

Yes.

DATE

What kind of things do you write?

ALEX

I write musical theatre.

Mr Brackton SIGHS.

BRACKTON

Show tunes?

Alex nods. Mr Brackton crosses something out on Alex's application.

Miss Joan, however, smiles.

JOAN

Why don't you play us something?

Alex nods again and reaches to his satchel on the floor. He pulls another score out of his bag and places it onto the piano.

He pushes his glasses up to the top of his nose.

He looks at the sheet music, and then down at the piano keys before him.

He begins to play SOULFUL, FOLK CHORDS.

Miss Joan looks up at him and smiles.

Mr Brackton pulls a copy of the score out of his file. He looks down at the sheet music, it's handwritten and scruffy.

Alex loops the chords around one more time and takes a breath.

ALEX

THEY TOLD ME THAT I'D NEVER FIND
YOU/TOLD ME NOT EVEN TO TRY./

His voice is in tune but not impressive.

Already, Mr Brackton is looking through the files of other candidates.

Miss Joan, however, maintains focus on him.

ALEX (CONT'D)

BUT I'LL SEARCH HIGH AND LOW/AS I
SAID I WOULD GO/TO THE ENDS OF THE
EARTH JUST TO FLY.

As Alex plays a short bridge the sound of the 'CELLO begins to play in his head and accompanies him into the second verse.

ALEX (CONT'D)

YOU LEFT ON A SUNNY SPRING
MORNING,/AS THE BIRDS TOOK TO THE
TREES./AND I WOKE UP ALONE/MY HEART
WEIGHED LIKE STONE/AS I KNEW YOU
WERE LOST IN THE BREEZE.

Alex begins to ramp up the intensity of his playing. As he does, a DRUM FILL can be heard and Alex is in

INT. MUSIC CLUB - NIGHT

Alex is on stage with a DRUMMER, CELLIST, and a GUITARIST all playing with the adoring faces of the packed house looking up at him.

ALEX
AND NOW I'M A SHADOW IN SUNSET./AND
NOW I'M A DAZZLING LOSS.

INT. AUDITION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Miss Joan looks at Alex, lost in the world of his music.

ALEX
/AND I'M RAIN, I RESIGN,/'CAUSE I
WANTED IT FINE./AND I THOUGHT
THROUGH THIS LIFE WE WOULD CROSS.

INT. MUSIC CLUB - CONTINUOUS

The drummer takes the volume down and leaves the next verse to the guitarist's picking, the 'cello and Alex.

ALEX
YOU'RE CLOTHES ARE STILL IN THE
CLOSET,/YOU'RE DISHES ARE STILL IN
THE SINK./

INT. AUDITION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

All of the panel now, except Mr Brackton, watch mesmerised at Alex's now melancholic state.

ALEX
BUT YOUR SHOES ARE GONE NOW/AND I'M
WONDERING HOW/

Alex briefly HITS A WRONG NOTE.

Quick as a flash, Mr Brackton looks up and shakes his head. Alex's voice cracks but he gets it back together.

ALEX (CONT'D)
I'LL BRING ALL OF THIS BACK FROM
THE BRINK.

Alex begins to rev up the volume and complexity of his playing as he bridges into the final chorus.

INT. CONCERT HALL - NIGHT

Alex plays on a grand piano at the centre of the stage. An orchestra plays behind him.

ALEX
 AND NOW I'M A SHADOW IN SUNSET./AND
 NOW I'M A DAZZLING LOSS./AND I'M
 RAIN, BY DESIGN,/I REMEMBER YOU
 FINE/BUT FORGOT WITHOUT YOU I'M A
 LOSS.

INT. AUDITION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Alex plays the last few chords softly.

ALEX
 BUT WITH YOU I WAS ALWAYS A LOSS.

He holds the last chord on the sustain pedal, before releasing and looking sheepishly up at the audition panel.

The panel turn to each other and speak in HUSHED VOICES, Alex can only make out some words.

BRACKTON
 Absolutely not, it's not nearly
 appropriate...

JOAN
 There is some merit you can't
 deny...

DATE
 It is only a few weeks...

JOAN
 My student, I promise...

BRACKTON
 Okay alright, fine...

The panel turn back to Alex, Mr Brackton takes a breath and opens his mouth.

TITLE: THE CONTEST

EXT. RAVENSCAR COLLEGE - DAY

TITLE: ONE WEEK LATER

INT. COMMON ROOM - DAY

A cosy room filled with squishy armchairs and a fireplace. A trestle table with a hot water urn and tea and coffee table has been put out.

A vinyl record player is producing JAZZ MUSIC.

The CANDIDATES stand around the room CHATTING with their PARENTS.

MR PEAL (50) stands up and walks the middle of the room, raising his arms.

PEAL
Hello everyone.

The CHATTERING DIES DOWN.

PEAL (CONT'D)
I just wanted to say a massive congratulations to you all for qualifying for Ravenscar's summer admissions contest and a warm welcome to Stables House. Mrs Peal and I are really excited to have you here with us for the next few weeks as you practice for the concert. Now you'll notice there's lots of other friendly faces here, they're all our existing music students preparing for the concert with you. We'll have a tour soon but for now grab a drink and get to know each other.

Arthur pats Alex on the back

ARTHUR
It's like nothing's changed since I was a boy here.

He looks around at the other students, noticing a female African American student.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
Although I think that the competition for admissions was a little more serious back then.

Mr Peal joins them.

PEAL

Arthur, so good to see you. How was Berlin?

He shakes Arthur's hand. Arthur nods approvingly.

ARTHUR

Peal. Excellent, I always enjoy playing with the Germans their timing is impeccable.

Mr Peal notices Alex.

PEAL

And this must be Alex, we're very excited to have a Stanley back in the fold.

ARTHUR

Peal and I were boys here when his father was housemaster.

PEAL

Just so. Now Alex, I want you to meet the other contestants, Sarah.

The African American student, SARAH (16), turns around.

PEAL (CONT'D)

Alex, this is Sarah. Sarah, Alex. Sarah comes to us by way of Boston School of Advanced Recital and Alex from a long line of professional players.

SARAH

Hey.

ALEX

Hi.

Mr Peal turns to a boy with blond hair and an athletic frame.

PEAL

Tom.

TOM (17) turns around. He has a boyish attractiveness and gives a pleasant smile.

PEAL (CONT'D)

Tom Hughes has given up a promising rugby career to be with us, good man. So... Alex is piano, Tom is bass and Sarah is flute, good mix, and all boarding as well. I've put Alex and Tom in a room together. Sarah, you'll be pleased not know you have your own room in the East Wing. Now if the parents would follow Mrs Peal we'll take our contestants on the diamond tour.

INT. PRACTICE CORRIDOR, STABLES HOUSE - DAY

A long, thin corridor lined with doors. Various different INSTRUMENT SOUNDS bleed into the corridor.

PEAL

You'll get used to the noise. Now there's a piano in every room. You're free to use any of them but for you three I've prepared something special.

He leads them to the end of the corridor. Here, there are three doors - each one with the name of a contestant written on a plaque attached to the door.

PEAL (CONT'D)

Each of you gets their own room! Now these are yours until the concert and of course the one student the contest admits will get to keep their room.

He moves to the end of the corridor.

PEAL (CONT'D)

Just like George here.

They peer in the window. Inside, GEORGE (18) sits at an electric organ.

He plays a piece of seemingly impossible CLASSICAL MUSIC with an unbelievable level of technical precision.

PEAL (CONT'D)

Last year's winner and something of a maverick.

George has an unsettling intensity about him as he stares at the sheet music before him. He has long, greasy hair and unkempt stubble.

PEAL (CONT'D)

And one day you could be just like him. Now, any questions?

SARAH

Is it all right if we practice?

PEAL

What now? Yes, if you'd like, get in early, your instruments are inside. Alex, the college have sent a Yamaha for you to use. Well, I won't hold you back any further, any questions I'll be in the common room.

He walks down the corridor and exits. The contestants look into the rooms.

TOM

Wow, this is pretty impressive, right?

SARAH

Well, I suppose they're... different from the spaces at Boston.

Alex opens the door to his practice room. It has an upright Yamaha and a window that overlooks the playing fields and the setting sun.

ALEX

It'll do.

TOM

What's wrong with you guys?

Tom opens the door to his room. A double bass stands up by the windows. Tom enters.

TOM (CONT'D)

It's neat, huh.

Alex smiles.

TOM (CONT'D)

Or is this unimpressive compared to whatever elite schools you've been to before?

Sarah and Alex exchange a look.

TOM (CONT'D)
Well, I like it!

He opens the case for his double bass.

TOM (CONT'D)
Ahhhhh. It's beautiful, I shall
call him Tom.

ALEX
I'm very happy for you.

SARAH
Well, boys, take a long look
because you're getting chucked out
of here by Christmas. Only one
winner, right?

As she speaks MUSIC begins to fade up.

ALEX
Someone's confident.

SARAH
It's the thing about you boys.

She puts her arms around Tom and Alex.

SARAH (CONT'D)
CONFIDENCE, FOR ME, IS NOT
COMPLACENCY/BUT WHEN YOU GUYS SHOW
IT I ALWAYS SEE/

She turns around to face them.

SARAH (CONT'D)
A TASTELESS LACK OF TALENT AND/I
KNOW YOU JUST DON'T HAVE IT.

In a musical interlude Sarah takes Alex into

INT. ALEX'S PRACTICE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

She sits him down at the piano and he starts to play as she
rounds on Tom, who raises his eyebrows.

SARAH
SEE I KNOW YOU'VE TRAINED HARD SURE
YOU HAVE/BUT I'M ANOTHER LEVEL
AND/YOU'RE GONNA FIND OUT THE HARD
WAY HOW/YOU'RE GOING HOME, MIGHT AS
WELL PACK NOW.

Tom suddenly has his bass and is playing along, smirking

SARAH (CONT'D)
'CAUSE I'M THE ONLY WINNER GONNA
SNATCH THAT PRIZE./

She sits beside Alex and rests her head on his shoulder.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Yes! I'M THE ONLY WINNER HERE,
sorry guys!/

ALEX
YOUR CONFIDENCE MIGHT BE YOUR
DOWNFALL./

Sarah gets up and pats Alex on the head.

SARAH
FROM WAY UP HERE YOU'RE LOOKING
MIGHTY SMALL/'CAUSE THE WINNER IS
RIGHT BEFORE YOUR EYES.

Sarah exits to

INT. PRACTICE CORRIDOR, STABLES HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

She moves into

INT. SARAH'S PRACTICE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Opens her flute case and begins to play a FLUTE SOLO.

INT. ALEX'S PRACTICE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Tom, still playing bass, leans towards Alex.

TOM
WITH HER HEAD IN THE CLOUDS SHE
MIGHT NOT SEE/THAT THE ONLY WINNER
AROUND HERE IS GONNA BE ME.

Sarah dances in wielding her flute.

SARAH
 SORRY, BABE, THAT JUST CAN'T
 BE./THE WINNER'S BEEN DECIDED AND
 IT'S GONNA BE ME./'CAUSE I'M THE
 ONLY WINNER GONNA SNATCH THAT
 PRIZE./Yes! I'M THE ONLY WINNER
 HERE, sorry guys!/'

ALEX
 (to Tom)
 Her confidence, surely her
 downfall.

SARAH
 WITH THE PRIZE IN MY HAND I'LL BE
 STANDING TALL!/'CAUSE SURELY I'M
 THE WINNER AND I AIN'T NO FOOL!

The musical fantasy is over. Sarah smiles at Alex and Tom.

A beat.

ALEX
 Compelling.

TOM
 Yes, we're trembling over here.

ALEX
 Mmm.

Sarah leans in.

SARAH
 If you boys don't want to take me
 seriously that's just fine but
 there's only one place on the
 course and I'm gonna win it.

She leaves. Alex looks at Tom.

They wait for a moment and then burst out LAUGHING.

EXT. CAR PARK - DAY

The sun is setting over the valley. Alex and his parents
 stand before the car.

Rugby players toss a ball around in the background.

ARTHUR
 Sports candidates, steer well
 clear, son.

MARY

We're so pleased you're up for this. For a long time I thought you had no hope.

ALEX

Thanks, mum.

ARTHUR

Yes, your flights of fancy haven't held you back yet, Alex. But please, avoid those damn shows. They induce all sorts of... alternative behaviour which would be so disappointing for you to exhibit. Focus on the task at hand.

ALEX

I will.

INT. BOYS' CORRIDOR - NIGHT

The corridor is situated at the top of the stairs. It's clean and modern but not especially glamorous or ornate.

Tom and Alex reach the top of the stairs. Alex is holding his orientation sheet. They walk and talk.

TOM

Ah, I wouldn't worry about her. She's got a competitive spark but who hasn't? Which one are we?

ALEX

One hundred and four.

TOM

There are not one hundred and four dorms here.

ALEX

It's what it says.

Tom looks at the paper.

TOM

Well, go figure.

Alex notices the door with 104 on it's plaque.

ALEX

Here.

He opens the door and they enter

INT. DORM - CONTINUOUS

It's a poky room but it has a large window which overlooks the sports field. Two cabin beds, each with a desk underneath, sit either side of the door.

TOM
Mmm, cosy.

The boys' bags have already been placed on the beds, which are made. On one bed is a guitar case.

TOM (CONT'D)
I was wondering why that wasn't in the rehearsal rooms.

He jumps up on his cabin bed.

ALEX
Your guitar?

Tom hugs the case.

TOM
My baby! See that's your problem Stanley, you can't keep a grand in your bed.

ALEX
I often lament that.

Tom opens his case and pulls his guitar out.

ALEX (CONT'D)
All right then give us a tune.

TOM
I thought you'd never ask! So, you like pop rock?

ALEX
Yeah, or, you know, something good? There's plenty of good guitar parts in musicals.

TOM
Geez, I didn't know I was in with a queer...

Alex winces slightly.

TOM (CONT'D)
 Fine, how about this?

He starts to pick at the guitar.

TOM (CONT'D)
 THERE'S A LONELY HOUSE BESIDE THE
 SEA THAT'S FALLING FROM THE SHORE./

Tom's playing is increasingly mesmeric.

EXT. BEACH - EVENING

Sunset as the waves lap into the sand on the beach.

Tom and Alex sit on the sand looking out, behind them is a blue shack with a wooden porch.

Tom plays and sings.

TOM
 IT SOMETIMES WONDERS OUT ALOUD,
 SAYS "WHAT WAS I MADE FOR?"/ THAT
 LONELY HOUSE BESIDE THE SEA MAY NOT
 YET HAVE A CLUE./BUT THERE'S A DAY
 NOT FAR FROM NOW WHEN I'LL LIVE
 THERE WITH YOU.

Tom looks at Alex and smiles.

TOM (CONT'D)
 THERE'S A LONELY HOUSE BESIDE THE
 SEA AND IT'S BEEN PAINTED BLUE./
 ITS SLATES ARE FALLING FROM THE
 ROOF AND PAPER'S PEELING TOO./WHEN
 WE LIVE THERE WE'LL FIX IT UP AND
 MAKE IT LOOK JUST FINE./THE LONELY
 HOUSE WILL HAVE US THERE TO HELP IT
 PASS THE TIME.

As Tom finishes picking he puts the guitar down.

INT. DORM - NIGHT

Alex and Tom are back on separate beds. The musical fantasy is over.

A KNOCK on the door and Mr Peal enters.

PEAL
 Evening, boys.

He puts his hand over the light switch.

PEAL (CONT'D)
You'll have plenty of time to
practice tomorrow, time for bed.

Mr Peal flicks off the light and leaves. Tom flicks on a torch.

He reaches down to his desk and takes a portable tape cassette player off it.

ALEX
That was really good Tom.

TOM
I know, maybe one day I'll get you
on rock.

ALEX
Maybe. If we're here long enough.

TOM
Well, you'll probably be fine if
you don't get the scholarship, I
need it or it's back to Peckham
with me.

ALEX
At least you're not facing the
wrath of your concert performing
parents if you don't get it.

Tom doesn't respond for a moment. He takes the headphones coming out of the cassette and puts them in his ears.

TOM
Well good luck Alex, may the best
man... or woman... nah, man, win.

INT. MISS JOAN'S PIANO ROOM - DAY

A grand occupies most of the small room. The clock on her wall reads "10AM".

Miss Joan sits at her desk looking over some sheet music.

A KNOCK on the door.

JOAN
Yes?

Alex comes in.

JOAN (CONT'D)

Ah, excellent. Hello Alex, how are you?

ALEX

I'm great, thank you.

JOAN

All settled?

ALEX

Yup.

JOAN

Good. Now, as you know, these sessions are scheduled in for you and the other scholarship contestants, whom I'm told you've met. Sarah has Mr Brackton, Tom has Mr Date and you've got me, you lucky thing.

Alex smiles.

Miss Joan grabs a bunch of scores from her desk and walks to the piano.

JOAN (CONT'D)

Now we have no time, sit down,...

She gestures at the piano stall and Alex sits.

JOAN (CONT'D)

No time at all to lose. We need to get you up to scratch for the concert at the end of the summer so I thought we'd start with Liebesträume number three for your pre-1900, yes?

She dumps the scores on the piano's music stand. She opens a book to an earmarked page.

JOAN (CONT'D)

What do you make of this?

Alex swallows as he looks at the score. An awkward silence.

JOAN (CONT'D)

Well, give it a go.

Alex raises his hands to the keys and pushes his glasses up his nose. He takes a breath and BEGINS TO PLAY.

As he begins the piece he once again demonstrates a cool technical command.

As he moves through the phrases there's a lack of depth and emotion in his playing.

As he reaches the runs in the piece, however, he becomes confused and FALTERS.

He attempts to regain control but he is lost by this point.

JOAN (CONT'D)

Okay, all right, I'm just going to stop you there because you seem to be struggling a little.

ALEX

Yeah...

JOAN

It's okay, it's a hard piece.
Perhaps if I were to demonstrate.

She indicates for him to move off the piano stall and he does so. She takes his place.

She takes pause and then LAUNCHES INTO THE PIECE, her fingers dancing across the keyboard.

As the piece climaxes there's a KNOCK ON THE DOOR. Miss Joan stops playing.

Mr Brackton enters.

BRACKTON

Very impressive Miss Joan, although I'm afraid to say Alex will have to perform on his own at the concert.

Miss Joan glares at him.

JOAN

Yes, of course.

BRACKTON

I've been in consultation with the other music staff and we think it would be a good idea to have the scholarship candidates do some ensemble work. Shall we have him in the orchestra?

JOAN

I see no reason why not to.

BRACKTON

Precisely, Alex will be expected in the Steetson Hall at one thirty.

He exits.

JOAN

Well, a pleasant interlude. Shall we pick up from the top?

INT. STEETSON HALL - DAY

A large performance space, the stage set beneath raked seating.

STUDENTS set their instrument cases down on chairs before removing their instruments and taking to the stage.

At the centre of the stage a grand piano has been placed next to a large electric organ. George sits at the organ, staring at the sheet in front of him.

Alex is sitting in the stalls looking at his piano part for a piece called "Celestial Fantasia Piano/Organ Duet with Orchestra". He looks up at the grand piano nervously.

A shadow is cast over him by a double bass being placed.

Alex looks up to see Tom, standing stoically with his bass.

Tom looks down at Alex.

TOM

It's about how you use it.

Alex smiles as Tom shuffles off towards the stage.

The students hush as the door to the hall opens and Mr Brackton enters. He marches down to the stage and stands at a podium in front of the piano.

BRACKTON

Alex... care to join us?

Alex rushes up to the piano and sits with it.

BRACKTON (CONT'D)

Welcome all, to our summer rehearsals for the inaugural concert.

(MORE)

BRACKTON (CONT'D)

Now we have three scholarship candidates for next year's entry and we'll be practicing some pieces with them, very exciting. So first up, Alex duets with George in Celestial Fantasia, let's go.

He raises his baton. The orchestra do the same with their instruments.

Alex looks at the sheets. The music becomes an unfocused mess. He pushes up his glasses.

Mr Brackton points to an oboe player who PLAYS A CONCERT A. The other musicians join in and TUNE UP. He turns to Alex.

BRACKTON (CONT'D)

I require perfection. And I hope you can deliver.

He turns back around.

Alex looks up, Tom smiles enthusiastically at him. He swallows and looks back down to the music before quickly glancing at George who looks daggers at him.

The TUNING DIES DOWN. Mr Brackton counts four with his baton.

An EXPLOSION OF MUSIC as the orchestra launches into the piece.

Alex, who missed the count in is now looking like a deer in the headlights as he tries to find his place in the music.

He tries to join in but he is simply not in time.

George raises his hands ready to play his part.

Mr Brackton hits his music stand with his baton.

BRACKTON (CONT'D)

Stop.

The orchestra falters and COMES TO A HALT. George looks around, furious.

BRACKTON (CONT'D)

Excellent work from our orchestra. Lead piano we had the right notes just not in the right place. Again.

He counts in again. The orchestra LAUNCHES INTO THE MUSIC. This time Alex starts correctly.

He plays the dramatic chords proficiently and beings to scale up and down the runs.

George once again gets ready to play the organ part but Alex's hand hits the wrong keys and creates an AWFUL DISSONANCE.

BRACKTON (CONT'D)

Stop.

Again the orchestra FALTERS.

BRACKTON (CONT'D)

I am so sorry George, I promise you will actually be able to play at some stage. Alex. Stand up please.

Alex does. Mr Brackton grabs him by the shoulders and steers him into the front row seat and sits him down.

BRACKTON (CONT'D)

You've been promoted to audience member.

Mr Brackton gets back up onto the stage and sits at the piano.

BRACKTON (CONT'D)

Once again, for our VIP.

He counts four from the piano and A BEAUTIFUL, DRAMATIC sound radiates from the stage.

This time the opening is played perfectly and George sets down his fingers once again.

He begins to play. The organ dominating the sound gives a supernatural quality to the music.

Alex looks to the ground, his face burning red.

The music has now reaches a climax and Mr Brackton turns to Alex while still playing.

The music comes TO AN END. Mr Brackton stands.

BRACKTON (CONT'D)

Wonderful work everyone. Sarah, Tom an excellent first attempt.

He turns around to Alex.

Alex looks up. The rest of the orchestra have started playing a TENSE STACCATO MUSIC.

BRACKTON (CONT'D)
 MAYBE YOU THINK THIS IS JUST A
 GAME/TO MAKE THE TIME JUST FLY ON
 BY/

He begins to move towards Alex as the orchestra underscores his song.

BRACKTON (CONT'D)
 BUT ALEX I THINK YOU'RE THE ONE TO
 BLAME/ON LOSING YOUR PLACE HERE AND
 WHY?

He gets to Alex, and kneels down.

BRACKTON (CONT'D)
 YOUR PLAYING IS SLOPPY AND
 TASTELESS./

He pulls Alex up and leads him to the orchestra.

BRACKTON (CONT'D)
 YOUR ATTITUDES EVEN MORE GRIM./

He sits him down at the piano.

BRACKTON (CONT'D)
 AND I DON'T HAVE THE TIME/TO WASTE
 ON YOU AND I'M/NOT QUITE SURE WHERE
 I SHOULD BEGIN.

He stops the orchestra and then counts them in. The music is now UPTEMPO.

BRACKTON (CONT'D)
 I'VE WELCOMED YOU INTO THE
 FAMILY/THESE PROS HAVE WORKED HARD
 TO BE IN./

He gestures around to the orchestra.

BRACKTON (CONT'D)
 AND YOU STRUT IN HERE/WITH YOUR
 AWFUL GEAR/AND DEMEAN ALL THE WORK
 WE'VE PUT IN.

He brings the music downtempo.

BRACKTON (CONT'D)
 BUT I SHOULD JUST GIVE YOU ONE MORE
 CHANCE./IT'S TIME YOU SHOULD PROVE
 YOUR PLACE./

He opens his score.

BRACKTON (CONT'D)
 TRY BAR FIFTY NINE/IF YOU PLAY IT
 JUST FINE/I WON'T THINK YOU'RE
 WASTING OUR SPACE.

He looks at Alex.

BRACKTON (CONT'D)
 Well?

He counts him in. Alex butchers the phrase.

BRACKTON (CONT'D)
 Too bad.

The orchestra closes the music.

The musical fantasy is over. Mr Brackton shakes his head.

BRACKTON (CONT'D)
 It seems ensemble work isn't for
 you. You're excused.

Alex slowly gets up from his chair and exits the room. Sarah looks at him leave with pity on her face.

EXT. RAVENSCAR COLLEGE, QUADRANGAL - DAY

Alex sits on a bench in front of a tree looking at STUDENTS walk by.

His satchel is by his side and he has a copy of the "Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street" piano/conductor's score. He looks utterly downcast.

Sarah comes out of the college and spots him. She sits down by him.

SARAH
 Hey.

ALEX
 Hi.

Sarah looks at him.

SARAH
 That was pretty harsh, huh.

ALEX
Yeah, and I'm supposed to be an
accomplished player.

SARAH
Brackton's decided he's going to
play the duet with George at the
concert.

A beat.

SARAH (CONT'D)
What went wrong?

ALEX
It's this music, I just- hate
playing it.

SARAH
You hate classical music?

ALEX
No, that came out wrong. I don't
hate it I just- it's not me.

Sarah notices his score.

SARAH
Is that you?

ALEX
It's amazing.

SARAH
Let me see.

She takes the score from him and opens it to "Joanna:
Quartet."

She reads for a moment and her eyes grow wide. She hands it
back.

SARAH (CONT'D)
That's disgusting.

Alex laughs.

SARAH (CONT'D)
So what is it about that then?

ALEX
Sondheim?

Sarah nods.

ALEX (CONT'D)
It's the stories I think. Being
part of telling an amazing story
through music.

SARAH
Holst does that.

ALEX
It's not the same.

SARAH
Maybe not for you.

Tom walks out of music hall.

SARAH (CONT'D)
But Tom's music does that too. He
says you don't like rock.

ALEX
I don't know, he writes pretty good
music too.

Tom notices them and begins to walk across the quad.

SARAH
Do you like him?

Alex turns to her, suddenly afraid.

ALEX
How do you mean?

SARAH
You know, like fancy him?

Alex shuffles uncomfortably.

ALEX
No. Absolutely not. I don't think
like that.

Sarah raises her hands.

SARAH
Okay, okay. I was just asking. I've
seen him look at you though.

ALEX
What?

Sarah gets up.

SARAH
Never mind. A straight musical
theatre writer. That's a novelty.

ALEX
No, it's not.

Sarah shrugs and walks away.

Tom walks up to Alex.

TOM
What did she want?

ALEX
She just wanted to talk about Mr
Brackton.

TOM
Dick. The man has no class at all.

Just as he says this Mr Brackton walks out of the college.

TOM (CONT'D)
And with that we're off. Come on,
let's get out of here.

They walk off towards the playing fields.

TOM (CONT'D)
So a viola player walks into a bar
with a frog on his head. The
bartender says "What's that" and
the frog says "It's a viola
player."

ALEX
That isn't funny.

INT. DORM - NIGHT

Alex is writing on a note pad. Tom is listening to his
cassette player.

Tom takes off his headset.

TOM
You still composing?

Alex turns to him.

ALEX
No, these are lyrics.

TOM
Cool, can I see?

Alex quickly puts the paper face down on the bed.

TOM (CONT'D)
I don't think Sarah's been enjoying
her tutorials with Mr Brackton.

ALEX
What makes you say that?

TOM
I don't know, whenever I ask her
about them she just shrugs me off.
But with him on board she's
probably gonna win. He was George's
mentor too. Hey, give this a
listen.

He throws the TAPE player at Alex, it hits him in the face.

ALEX
Ow, Tom!

TOM
Put it on. It's about time you got
an education

Alex puts the headphones on. He nods his head as he listens
to the music and then takes the headphones off.

TOM (CONT'D)
Well?

ALEX
... It's okay.

He smiles and reaches towards Tom with the headphones.

Tom snatches them back.

TOM
(Ruffled)
... Just okay. Why I oughtta...

ALEX
I'm sorry it's just not my thing.

Tom smiles.

TOM
 In time you will learn to
 appreciate it. I shall make a
 rocker out of you yet.

ALEX
 Hmm... sure.

TOM
 (Mimicking)
 Hmm... sure.

INT. MR BRACKTON'S OFFICE - DAY

Mr Brackton occupies a large office overlooking the front of
 the college. He paces as Miss Joan sits calmly on a chair.

BRACKTON
 He's not giving me much choice.

Miss Joan SIGHS.

BRACKTON (CONT'D)
 His audition was lacklustre to say
 the least and we both know his
 playing is highly uneven.

JOAN
 It's all new music. We've had
 candidates who have been far
 shakier at the start.

BRACKTON
 Today was a disaster, Rachel. He
 was holding up the whole orchestra!

JOAN
 Yes, well, perhaps he shouldn't be
 in the orchestra I agree. But to
 kick him off the scholarship is
 both unfair and premature. I see
 great musical potential in him I
 just need to have a better idea of
 how to unlock it.

BRACKTON
 Start thinking then. I will be
 monitoring his progress and if I
 detect more evidence that he is
 going to be a public embarrassment
 to this department than he will be
 removed from the scholarship.

INT. ALEX'S STUDIO - NIGHT

Alex sits at his piano with the sheet music for Liebesträume open in front of him.

Alex can hear the MUTED SOUND OF SARAH PRACTICING THE FLUTE next door.

Alex starts to PLAY. Again, his playing is awkward and, after hitting a few too many wrong notes, he slams his hand down on the keyboard.

He stares at the sheet music in frustration.

He sits alone for a moment.

Then, he pulls a book of manuscript paper out of his satchel. He takes out a pencil and begins to write music.

He PLAYS A FEW NOTES on the piano before continuing to write.

He begins to get more excited, smiling to himself as he PLAYS MORE OF HIS MUSIC on the piano.

The music is soulful and intense, Alex's expression as he plays this is completely different to when he plays the Liebesträume. He smiles and leans into the music.

The MUSIC COMES TO A CLOSE.

As he does so he hears the MUTED SOUND OF TOM PRACTICING on the bass.

He gets up from the chair and slowly opens the door to his studio.

INT. PRACTICE CORRIDOR, STABLES HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

He walks over to Tom's studio and peers through the window.

Tom has set up a TAPE PLAYER which is playing the piano part to Eccles's Sonata no 11 in G Minor. He plays the haunting bass part.

His focus is completely in the music. Alex is captivated by the devotion Tom is showing to performing, his usual joviality is gone.

Alex turns around at the sound of a DOOR OPENING behind him. Sarah stands in the doorway.

SARAH

A bit of a dark horse isn't he?

Alex nods.

SARAH (CONT'D)

It doesn't matter you know. I don't mind, you can tell me.

Alex turns to her, he looks uncomfortable.

ALEX

There's nothing to tell.

Sarah SIGHS.

SARAH

Are you worried about what people will think?

ALEX

There is nothing to tell you.

SARAH

If you two like each other and do nothing about it you're just... never mind, I'm turning in.

She walks down the corridor and exits.

Alex takes another look at Tom playing before walking away.

INT. DORM - NIGHT

Alex enters the dorm and flicks the lights on.

George is sitting at his desk with his feet up.

Alex jumps a little in surprise.

George smiles.

ALEX

George? I-

GEORGE

Hello Alex. I thought we could go for a walk.

ALEX

I-

GEORGE

Come on, you're up for the scholarship I won. There's so much I can tell you about it.

He gets up, towering over Alex. He rounds on Alex -
- and PRODUCES A SWITCHBLADE.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
I think it would be a good idea.

Alex stands absolutely stunned. He looks up at George.

ALEX
...Okay.

GEORGE
Turn around and walk out. Don't say
a word.

Alex walks into

INT. STABLES HOUSE, BOYS CORRIDOR

George follows him.

GEORGE
Take a right.

Alex walks down the corridor. George has the knife pressed up
against him.

EXT. PADDOCK - NIGHT

Alex walks out of the stables onto the paddock, followed by
George.

GEORGE
I thought we could go on a romantic
walk in the moonlight. You, me and
my friend.

He pulls the knife up to Alex's face.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
His name is Mr Boo. Say hello.

Alex stands petrified.

George thrusts the knife right up to his face.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Say it.

ALEX
Hello.

GEORGE

He has a name, Alex.

Sarah looks out of one of the dorm windows and frowns.

ALEX

Hello, Mr Boo.

GEORGE

Mr Boo isn't very happy. He heard you kept spoiling rehearsals today. He thinks you ought to be punished really.

SLOW BIG BAND MUSIC penetrates the air. George runs around Alex and turns to face him. He starts to sway.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

OH, YOU. MR BOO./YOU ALWAYS KNOW JUST WHAT TO DO.

He holds the knife up in the moonlight.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

YOU'RE COLD AND SHEENY AND KIND OF DREAMY.

He holds it back up to his face and smiles.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

WHAT WOULD I DO WITHOUT YOU?

Suddenly multiple Georges run out of the darkness each with their own knife.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

OH, YOU.

GEORGE BACKUPS

OH, YOU.

GEORGE

MR BOO./YOU KNOW JUST WHAT TO PUT US THROUGH./WHEN I'M IN A BAD PLACE YOU PUT A SMILE ON MY FACE./WHAT WOULD I DO WITHOUT YOU?

GEORGE BACKUPS (CONT'D)

MR BOO/AH- OH- PUT US THROUGH./WHEN HE'S IN A BAD PLACE YOU PUT A SMILE ON HIS FACE./WHAT WOULD HE DO WITHOUT YOU?

The music CRESCENDOS to the chorus.

GEORGE
 YOU'RE A FAITHFUL FRIEND/YOUR
 GOODNESS KNOWS NO END/AND WHEN I'M
 ALL ALONE/I'LL ALWAYS GET YOU AT
 THE END OF THE PHONE.

GEORGE BACKUPS
 MMM- OH- BA BA BUP SHOWADDA

They fall into a formation for the finale as the drums play a half time beat.

GEORGE
 OH, YOU. MR BOO./IT'S TIME TO
 SHOW ALEX WHAT YOU DO./IF HE
 KEEPS ON MESSING UP HE IS
 GONNA END UP IN
 THREE/DIFFERENT PARTS ALL
 THANKS TO YOU.

GEORGE BACKUPS (CONT'D)
 OH, YOU. MR BOO./IT'S TIME TO
 SHOW ALEX WHAT YOU DO./IF HE
 KEEPS ON MESSING UP HE IS
 GONNA END UP IN
 THREE/DIFFERENT PARTS ALL
 THANKS TO YOU.

George falls to his knees.

GEORGE
 OH, YOU... Mr Boo.

The fantasy is over. George pushes Alex towards a store house.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
 I think you can spend the night in
 a trunk.

Suddenly, the back door to the school building opens and Sarah walks out.

SARAH
 Alex?

Alex and George turn around.

Sarah runs up to them.

SARAH (CONT'D)
 There you are. What are you guys
 doing out?

GEORGE
 Nothing.

SARAH
 Well, Alex I need you to play
 something for me. Now.

Alex and George stand stock still.

SARAH (CONT'D)
That isn't a problem is it?

ALEX
... No.

Sarah grabs Alex's arm and pulls him back towards the stables.

SARAH
Later George.

GEORGE
See you soon.

INT. COMMON ROOM - NIGHT

Sarah pulls Alex into the room and turns around.

SARAH
What the hell was that?

ALEX
He- threatened me, because of the rehearsal today... Thank you- I don't know what would have happened if you hadn't shown up.

SARAH
We have to tell Mr. Peal.

ALEX
With what evidence?

SARAH
Someone has to know, he is psychotic!

A beat.

ALEX
Sarah, it'll probably make things worse. I don't want to say anything - not yet.

SARAH
Alex, if you don't want to tell anyone you don't have to but if it happens again I'm going to report it, okay?

ALEX

Okay.

SARAH

In the meantime maybe stick around
Tom, and steer clear of orchestra.

Alex nods. He exits.

Sarah smiles and Alex exits. Sarah sits on a chair, looking nervous.

A few moments pass and then Mr Brackton enters.

BRACKTON

Good evening, Sarah? Are you ready
to practice?

INT. DORM - NIGHT

Alex comes in, visibly shaken.

Tom is lying on his bed PICKING HIS GUITAR. There are now posters of rock bands up on the wall on Tom's side of the bedroom. Alex's side contains posters for Sondheim shows.

TOM

What happened to you?

ALEX

Nothing- I was talking to Sarah.
I'm going to turn in.

Tom puts down the guitar- still concerned.

TOM

Alex can I talk to you about
something?

Alex climbs into bed and SIGHS.

ALEX

Sure.

TOM

I-... never mind.

He turns out the lights.

INT. COMMON ROOM - DAY

Sarah sits down in an armchair looking over the common room.

Her eyes are red, she's been crying.

George walks in and crosses the room.

Sarah's fists clench but she does nothing but watch him walk through the front door.

Mrs Peal enters, she notices Sarah and smiles.

MRS PEAL

Hi Sarah.

She notices that Sarah is upset.

MRS PEAL (CONT'D)

Mind if I join you?

SARAH

No, not at all.

MRS PEAL

How's all it all going?

SARAH

The contest?

Mrs Peal nods.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Really well, thanks.

She sniffs.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Never can be too practiced and all but I'm confident.

MRS PEAL

Is there anything you want to talk to me about?

Sarah hesitates.

SARAH

...No. No, I'm fine.

MRS PEAL

If you're sure.

INT. STEETSON HALL - DAY

Alex, Tom and Sarah sit on the stage. Alex, behind the piano and Tom and Sarah with their instruments.

Sarah looks uncharacteristically nervous. She rubs her leg and doesn't make eye contact with anyone in the room.

Mr Brackton, Mr Date and Miss Joan sit in the stalls.

DATE

So the idea of this is we can evaluate where you've got to with your pieces and then with a little luck give you some pointers for the second half of your rehearsals. Now, can we see...

He looks between the three players.

DATE (CONT'D)

Alex?

Alex turns to the piano, the Liebesträume before him.

He BEGINS TO PLAY. Somehow, Alex's performance has deteriorated since he began to learn the piece.

He just about makes it through the first sections as he goes into the runs.

Mr Date chuckles to himself as Alex trips over the fast tempo.

Tom cringes slightly.

Mr Brackton looks stony.

Alex arrives at the end of the extract.

DATE (CONT'D)

Interesting. Okay, there is potential there. Why don't we hear from...

He looks between Sarah and Tom.

DATE (CONT'D)

Sarah.

Sarah looks up, wide eyed with fear.

SARAH

Actually, could Tom go first?

DATE

Something the matter?

A beat. Sarah's eyes dart towards Mr Brackton for a second.

SARAH
... Just nerves.

Mr Date chuckles.

DATE
You're going to have to overcome
those if you're going to play the
concert, come on.

Sarah takes a DEEP BREATH. She raises the flute to her lips.

DATE (CONT'D)
Wait a moment, sorry? Will she be
sitting for the performance?

Mr Brackton doesn't break eye contact from Sarah.

BRACKTON
No.

DATE
Well, could we have her stand,
please?

Sarah nods.

She begins to get out of her chair, holding onto it for
support. Her right leg begins to buckle.

DATE (CONT'D)
Sarah?

She lets go of the chair and her leg collapses as she falls
over.

DATE (CONT'D)
Sarah!

He runs up the stairs towards her.

Tom jumps from his chair.

TOM
You okay?

Alex turns around in his chair and stands.

INT. SARAH'S WARD, MEDICAL CENTRE - DAY

A small room mostly occupied with Sarah's bed, on which she
lies. She's fiddling with a portable cassette tape player.

Alex sits on a small chair beside her.

ALEX
Tom wanted to come as well.

Sarah smiles.

SARAH
He was here this morning. I'm glad
he's taken some time to actually
rehearse.

ALEX
How's your leg?

Sarah presses rewind on the tape player and then CLICKS it
onto pause.

SARAH
Oh, it's fine, bruised up is all.

ALEX
How did it happen? You were fine
after... George.

She rewinds and pauses again.

SARAH
Oh, I did some more practicing and
I fell over and bruised it.

ALEX
You did it falling over?

She sets the tape player down and shoot Alex a fierce stare.

SARAH
Yeah.

Alex SIGHS.

ALEX
I... don't believe you.

SARAH
What difference does it make? I'm
here to win, Alex. And if this is
part of what I have to do I'll do
it.

ALEX
You have to tell someone.

Sarah lets out a laugh.

SARAH
So do you.

Beat.

SARAH (CONT'D)
But that's the problem isn't it?
We're only brave enough to call
each other out. But not to fix our
own problems.

Alex nods.

Sarah looks out the window.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Oh, well.

In the distance a BELL TOLLS.

Alex stands up.

ALEX
I'll see you soon.

Sarah nods and Alex exits.

INT. MISS JOAN'S PIANO ROOM - DAY

Alex sits at the piano playing "No One Is Alone" from *Into The Woods*. Miss Joan enters.

JOAN
Ah, Alex. Nice to see you here
early. Right, we want to work on
your performance yesterday so get
Sondheim out of your head and play
me Liebesträume.

Miss Joan crosses the room and sits beside Alex.

Alex SIGHS and gets the sheet music out.

JOAN (CONT'D)
It's okay, it really doesn't have
to perfect- we have lots of time.
Just do the best you can.

Alex sets the music on the piano and pushes his glasses up.

He begins to PLAY. It's clumsy and confused, Alex becoming visibly more stressed out as the music gets more and more complex.

His increased agitation seems to bother Miss Joan more and more.

JOAN (CONT'D)
Okay, I'm just going to stop you there.

Beat.

JOAN (CONT'D)
Alex, what's wrong?

Alex just sits there for a moment.

JOAN (CONT'D)
I know Liebesträume isn't the easiest piece-

Alex shakes his head.

JOAN (CONT'D)
Look, Alex. You're a wonderful composer- I saw that on the audition. But this is a challenging performance competition. One your father would relish, I'm sure, but I just want you to know that no one is forcing you to do this.

Alex looks up at her.

JOAN (CONT'D)
You could go home.

Alex opens his mouth to speak.

JOAN (CONT'D)
I mean it's obviously your choice and if you want to stay I will fight your corner until the concert. And we will prepare well, and hard, and we will give winning our best shot. But you have to want it, okay?

Beat.

ALEX
I want it.

Miss Joan points to the score.

JOAN
Come on, from here.

Alex sits upright and BEGINS TO PLAY.

He doesn't get very far before his playing becomes muddled again.

JOAN (CONT'D)

Okay, I'm just going to stop you there.

ALEX

I know. Look, I'm trying with this, I really am. But it's making me feel like such a failure.

Miss Joan SIGHS.

JOAN

This is supposed to be as rewarding as well as it is challenging, Alex. Why don't we put this to one side for a moment? You're a composer, play me something you've written.

Alex perks up.

He sets his hands on the keyboard and BEGINS TO PLAY the song he's been working on.

The difference between his playing before and now is night and day.

He's composed and lyrical if not technically perfect. He comes to a STOP.

ALEX

It's not finished...

Beat.

JOAN

Alex, I think it's great. I want you to experience the same joy you have when you play Liszt - it all comes from the same core. Alex, you're competent enough to play this.

As she speaks MUSIC SWELLS UP in Alex's mind.

Miss Joan smiles at him.

JOAN (CONT'D)
 YOU CAN DO THIS, ALEX./I
 BELIEVE/YOU'LL GET THROUGH THIS
 ALEX/DON'T YOU LEAVE/YOUR STRENGTH
 BEHIND AND GIVE UP./

Alex turns from Miss Joan and looks at the sheet music.

JOAN (CONT'D)
 YOU'RE GOING TO THRIVE IN THE RUN
 UP.

Alex turns to Miss Joan, doubtful.

JOAN (CONT'D)
 Say it.

Alex TAKES A BREATH.

ALEX
 I CAN DO THIS./

JOAN
 YES BELIEVE IT, ALEX./

ALEX
 I BELIEVE/

JOAN
 YOU'LL GET THROUGH

ALEX	JOAN (CONT'D)
I CAN DO THIS./WON'T	THE PASSION YOU HAVE FOR YOUR
RELIEVE/THE PASSION I HAVE	MUSIC NOW./
FOR MY MUSIC NOW./	

ALEX/JOAN
 CONQUER THIS MOMENT, FIND OUT HOW.

Miss Joan gestures to the piano.

Alex begins to play. As he does he becomes lost in thought as
 THE MUSIC CONTINUES TO PLAY.

INT. SARAH'S PRACTICE ROOM - DAY

Sarah sits in the corner of her practice room. Her scores are
 on the floor.

She looks defeated and fresh tears fall from her eyes.

SARAH
I CAN DO THIS,/BE THE BEST./ALWAYS
KNEW THIS,/I'LL TOP THE REST.

INT. STEETSON HALL CORRIDOR - DAY

Tom walks down the corridor with his bass on his back.

TOM
AND EVEN IF WINNING JUST ISN'T FOR
ME./I'LL TRY TO BE THE BEST THAT I
CAN BE.

He enters

INT. STEETSON HALL - DAY

He begins to unpack his bass.

TOM
AND MAYBE I'M ONLY PIPE
DREAMING,/BUT I CAN'T STOP HOPE OR
BELIEVING./THAT MAYBE THEN ALEX
MIGHT NOTICE ME.

INT. MISS JOAN'S PIANO ROOM - DAY

Alex THUMPS AWAY ON THE PIANO.

ALEX
I CAN DO THIS/

INT. SARAH'S PRACTICE ROOM - DAY

SARAH
I HAVE TO BELIEVE/

INT. STEETSON HALL - NIGHT

TOM
WHAT WILL HE THINK WILL HE HATE
ME?/

INT. MISS JOAN'S PIANO ROOM - DAY

Alex gets up and exits.

ALEX
I'LL GET THROUGH THIS/

INT. SARAH'S PRACTICE ROOM - DAY

Sarah gets up and exits.

SARAH
CAN'T TAKE A REPRIEVE./

INT. STEETSON HALL - DAY

Alex and Sarah enter the hall. Tom has finished unpacking the bass and the walk up to the stage.

TOM
WHAT CAN I DO, WHAT'S WRONG WITH
ME?/

They all stand at different points of the stage.

The houselights fade down and three spotlights illuminate them.

ALEX/SARAH/TOM
AND MAYBE THIS CONTEST WILL BE THE
END/BUT I CAN'T GET OUT NOW I JUST
CAN'T PRETEND.

INTERLUDE MUSIC continues during -

MONTAGE

1. INT. MISS JOAN'S PIANO ROOM - DAY - Alex plays the piano at amazing speed and dexterity. His fingers dance over the board.

2. INT. MR BRACKTON'S OFFICE - NIGHT - Mr Brackton stands over Sarah as she plays the flute. He holds a cane.

3. INT. DORM - NIGHT - Alex reads the libretto for "A Little Night Music" while Tom listens to his cassette on headphones. Tom turns to look at Alex.

INT. STEETSON HALL - NIGHT

Alex plays the Steetson's grand piano now. Tom plays the bass and Sarah holds her flute.

ALEX
I HAVE TO BELIEVE THAT BRINGING
THEM PRIDE IS ENOUGH TO RELIEVE
THE PAIN./

TOM
(simultaneous with above)
WILL HE LEARN THAT I'M NOT SUCH A
FREAK, AN OUTCAST. WILL HE LOVE ME
JUST THE SAME?/

SARAH
(simultaneous with above)
CAN I BREAK THROUGH THE HURT THAT
HE INFLICTS ON ME, IS IT TOO LATE
TO TAKE BACK THE SHAME?/

ALEX/SARAH/TOM
AND AM I SURE I REALLY WANT THIS?
IS IT WORTH STARTING OVER AGAIN?

The MUSIC ENDS and THE SPOTLIGHTS GO OUT.

Darkness.

FADE IN:

EXT. CAR PARK - DAY

STUDENTS pack suitcases into their parents' cars.

Alex watches Tom pack his suitcase into a red Volvo.

ALEX
You drive this?

TOM
It's my baby?

ALEX
I thought your guitar was your
baby.

Tom hugs the side of his car.

TOM
I love all my children equally.

He turns back to face Alex.

TOM (CONT'D)
You'd be welcome back to my crappy
apartment.

Alex smiles.

ALEX
Nah, my parents want to see how far
I've got.

TOM
Surrey for you, then?

Alex nods.

TOM (CONT'D)
Well,

He CLOSES THE BOOT of his car.

TOM (CONT'D)
Suit yourself. Oh.

He walks to the side of the car and opens a door. He takes a pen and paper out of seat pocket and scribbles on it.

TOM (CONT'D)
My number, if you get bored.

He hands it to Alex.

EXT. ALEX'S HOUSE - DAY

The Mercedes pulls into the driveway outside.

Alex's lives in a large farm house in the countryside.

The sound of the LIEBESTRÄUME PLAYING ON PIANO fades in.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Arthur and Mary sit on a plush sofa watching Alex play on the grand piano. His suitcase is by the piano.

Alex plays quickly and intensely, with an accuracy we haven't seen before.

Arthur nods as he watches Alex. Mary beams with pride.

Alex plays up and down the scale runs. There is no joy in his face but a fierce concentration.

Mary glances at Arthur.

Alex's fingers dance down the keyboard. He slows down as he reaches the end and plays the single note that CONCLUDES THE PIECE.

Alex gets off the piano stall and turns nervously to his parents.

Arthur stands up, approaches his son, and extends his hand. Alex shakes it.

ARTHUR
Bloody marvellous.

Mary applauds enthusiastically and hugs Alex.

MARY
Oh, Alex, that was wonderful.

ALEX
Thanks, mum.

ARTHUR
You're getting closer and closer to becoming a great player. The only thing you lack now is a sense of emotional connection. You enjoy the music?

Alex pauses for a second.

ALEX
Yes, Dad.

ARTHUR
Of course you do, it's Liszt's best work. Now make me believe it. This music has so much more accomplishment, so much more class, than the drivel you usually enjoy. You've done so well.

Mary grabs Alex's suitcase.

MARY
You've brought lots, it's only a weekend.

Alex moves to take the bag off her.

ALEX
Oh, no, mum, I can take that.

MARY
No, no, it's fine.

She whisks the bag away and out of the door. Arthur turns to Alex, dwarfing him.

ARTHUR

Don't you worry about her. We've both been very concerned about you, Alex. We were worried that perhaps you weren't up to the challenge, but you're shaping up perfectly.

Alex nods.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

And I know you loved your composing but the drivel you produced pales in comparison to a fine performance of the classics, yes?

ALEX

Yeah.

A beat.

ALEX (CONT'D)

I might go and give her a hand.

Arthur gestures to the door.

ARTHUR

Feel free.

Alex exits.

INT. ALEX'S BEDROOM - DAY

Alex enters his room. His mother has opened his suitcase on the bed and is poring over it.

ALEX

Hey, mum, thought I'd give you a hand.

Mary turns around, pale as a sheet. She is holding Alex's manuscript book open to a page which is full of lyrics.

Alex freezes.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Mum..

MARY

What is this?

ALEX

I- They're just lyrics.

MARY

They're vile... are they true?

ALEX

No, no. It's just a song.

Mary begins to cry.

MARY

I thought all of this was over. I thought we had agreed that this, perversion was done with.

ALEX

It is, I swear, it is.

MARY

I need to tell your father.

Alex eyes grow wide with fear.

ALEX

No, don't. I promise, it's nothing don't tell him.

Mary pushes passed Alex and exits.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Arthur paces clutching the lyric sheet.

Alex sits in a large armchair, dwarfed.

Mary sits on a rocking chair in the corner of the room, silent, she holds a leaflet for "RELEASE CONVERSION".

ARTHUR

So it seems we can't beat it out of you.

Alex hangs his head in shame.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

And to think, after all I've forgiven you for. We had half a mind to send you away to stay with your aunt but...

He crosses over to Mary and snatches the leaflet from her.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

It seems like we have a new weekend
schedule for you.

He thrusts the leaflet at Alex.

INT. ALEX'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Alex lies in bed with a bed lamp on, illuminating the
leaflet.

He turns the page catching phrases such as "Freedom from
perverse persuasions" and "short course to heterosexual
orientation."

Alex begins to sob.

He puts the leaflet down and looks across to the piece of
paper with Tom's phone number, now on his bedside table.

INT. ALEX'S BEDROOM - DAY

Alex lies awake while a clock on his bedside table hits six
AM.

As he does he hears the SPLUTTERING of a car engine coming to
a stop outside.

Alex pulls back the curtain and sees the red Volvo.

EXT. ALEX'S HOUSE - DAY

It's just becoming light as Alex walks out of the front door
as Tom gets out of the car.

TOM

Your carriage awaits.

Alex shushes Tom, who opens the car door and Alex throws his
bag in.

TOM (CONT'D)

(Whispers)

Nice place you got.

ALEX

Yeah, well maybe not anymore.
Anywhere's better than here.

TOM
You might not think so where we're
going.

Alex gets in the passenger seat.

INT. VOLVO - CONTINUOUS

The car exits the driveway.

Alex shows Tom the leaflet.

TOM
Ouch. I'm sorry, man.

Alex
It's okay - I think. I'll be fine.

Tom gives Alex a friendly faux punch.

Tom
You will be. Open the glove
compartment.

Alex does so. It's full of cassette tapes.

TOM (CONT'D)
Well, stick one in.

ALEX
I don't know any of these bands.

TOM
Don't care, pop a random one in,
see what happens.

Alex sticks one into the cassette player. A DRUM BEAT STARTS.
Tom laughs.

TOM (CONT'D)
Any of them but that one.

Alex moves to eject the cassette.

TOM (CONT'D)
No, no. It's fine leave it in.

He nods his head in time to the music.

TOM (CONT'D)
I mean don't tell me this doesn't
get you pumped.

ALEX
It's pretty catchy-

TOM
DO DO DOO DO DOO DOO DO DO DOO DO
DO DOOOOOO!

ALEX
(Smirking)
You have such a lovely voice.

TOM
Thank you.

ALEX
How long did you say it was to your
house?

TOM
DO DO DOO DO DOO DOO DO DO DOO DO
DO DOOOOOO! About two hours.

ALEX
And how much of this is there?

TOM
I have enough cassettes to get us
there and back to school. I'M ON
THE HUNT I'M AFTER YOU!

ALEX
Lucky me.

TOM
AND I'M HUNGRY LIKE THE WOLF!

ALEX
So why the bass then if you love
all this?

TOM
Hey, I love me some jazz and
classical as much as I love this
stuff. I've got tapes of
everything.

ALEX
Ooh, can we listen to them?

TOM
No. AND I'M HUNGRY LIKE THE WOLF!
What about you, all classical and
no love for rock and pop?

ALEX

My parents aren't keen. They didn't even like my musical stuff. My composing was pretty disappointing for them.

TOM

Well, you shouldn't worry about disappointing them anymore!

Alex looks out of the window.

ALEX

I guess not.

TOM

I'M ON THE HUNT I'M AFTER YOU! Come on you know the words.

He nudges Alex, he smiles.

TOM (CONT'D)

AND I'M HUNGRY LIKE THE WOLF!

ALEX

(Unsure)
HUNGRY LIKE THE WOLF.

EXT. PECKHAM ESTATE - DAY

The car pulls up to a derelict car park which sits at the edge of a five storey concrete housing block.

TOM

Casa de Hughes.

Alex looks up at the block and fails to hide his fear.

TOM (CONT'D)

You'll love it!

EXT. APARTMENT ENTRANCE - DAY

Tom and Alex walk along a balcony which spans the length of the building.

He reaches his door and pulls out a key, unlocks it and enters, followed by Alex.

INT. TOM'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A small living room with a tiny CRT TV in one corner. A few doors lead off the living room, at the other end of a balcony which overlooks an old football pitch.

TOM

Just pop your bag down. Mum!

Alex puts his bag down. He walks through one of the doors.

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

She must have gone to work.

He walks back into the living room.

TOM (CONT'D)

So.

He points to each door.

TOM (CONT'D)

Kitchen. Mum's room, my room, bathroom. Happy days! Plus I hear they have plans to redevelop this place, lucky us!

Alex looks around.

There's a tattered rug on the floor and a bookcase that has pictures of a younger Tom playing rugby. One picture shows Tom, about ten years old, beaming proudly in a school uniform. The photo reads "St. Paul's School"

TOM (CONT'D)

Hey, come and see this.

He grabs Alex's bag and he and Alex go through into

INT. TOM'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Tom's bed lies on one side of the room with a rolled up sleeping bag on it.

In the corner of the room is an electric guitar plugged into a small guitar amp. Next to it is an electric keyboard.

TOM

Thought you might like that.

ALEX

Where did you get this?

TOM
It was my dad's.

Tom turns around and smiles.

ALEX
He's not here?

TOM
No. He, erm, worked in the city actually. But the crash caught up with him and he couldn't cope. Left mum and me to fend for ourselves.

ALEX
Wow, I'm really sorry.

TOM
Nah, it's all good. I had to leave my school and we moved here.

ALEX
Is that when you stopped playing rugby?

Tom hesitates for a moment.

TOM
No. Anyway, I thought, since we're both songwriters, we could try and write something together.

He sets Alex's bag down by a wardrobe.

TOM (CONT'D)
If you fancy it, we could do some recording. In the meantime, I can cook you something while you give this a whirl.

He goes up to the keyboard and turns it on.

Alex watches as Tom leaves.

He turns back to the keyboard. MUSIC fades up as the sound of the flat FADES into the background.

MONTAGE:

1. Alex plays on the keyboard.
2. Tom brings sandwiches in and they eat.
3. Alex is back on the keyboard.

4. Tom plays the guitar with him.

5. Tom is writing lyrics down on the page while Alex plays a hook on the keyboard.

6. Tom is playing an overdramatic guitar solo. He messes up and both him and Alex laugh.

EXT. COMMUNITY CENTRE - DAY

The Volvo pulls up outside.

TOM (V.O.)
So, this is everyone.

INT. STUDIO - DAY

Alex looks around. There's a keyboard like the one in Tom's flat. A drum kit and a series of guitars and amps.

KATE (17) sits behind the drum kit and MARCUS (17) tunes up the a guitar.

KATE
Yo.

Marcus nods at Alex.

ALEX
Hi...

TOM
Kate's gonna be hitting the kit and Marcus will be taking guitar. I'll rock bass. Alex you can play some of those catchy hooks on the keyboard.

Tom gestures to the keyboard.

KATE
So, what are we going to play?

TOM
We're gonna play a song Alex and I wrote today.

Alex reaches into his satchel and pulls out some lyric sheets and hands them out.

They all look down at their lyrics. Marcus' eyes narrow as he reads.

He looks up, coldly.

MARCUS
You're serious?

TOM
What's wrong?

Marcus takes off his guitar and puts it on the floor before pushing past Alex. As he walks past Tom.

MARCUS
I didn't realise you were such a fag.

TOM
Come on, Marcus.

Tom runs up to him and tries to grab his arm. Marcus violently pushes Tom out of the way.

MARCUS
Don't touch me.

He looks at Kate.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
Well?

KATE
What's wrong with you?

MARCUS
Forget it.

Marcus exits.

TOM
Prick.

KATE
Yup.

Alex shuffles uncomfortably, Tom notices this.

ALEX
I don't mean to be a problem.

KATE
You're not a problem, sweetie.
Marcus just doesn't like puffs.

Tom shoots her a look. Kate shrugs.

TOM
Well, looks like I'm on guitar
then. Bass is an overrated
instrument anyway.

KATE
Sweet, let's do it.

She counts in with her sticks and the BAND LAUNCHES IN.

The song starts with a CATCHY SYNTH HOOK which Alex plays through. Tom joins in on the guitar as Alex steps up to the microphone.

ALEX
I CAN'T GET USED TO/SEEING YOU AND
KNOWING THAT I GET TO SPEND TIME
WITH YOU.

Kate smiles as she plays a drum fill.

ALEX (CONT'D)
CAN'T GET USED TO/KNOWING THAT OUT
OF ALL THE PEOPLE OUT THERE I'M THE
ONE THAT YOU/ARE WASTING YOUR TIME
WITH.

Alex looks into the distance as he imagines-

INT. CITY MUSIC VENUE - NIGHT

Alex and co play in an underground club. There's a slew of screaming fans at the base of the stage.

ALEX
AND I WONDER IF YOU FEEL THE SAME
AS ME./WONDER IF YOU THINK A BOY
LIKE ME COULD,/LOVE A BOY LIKE YOU.

Tom launches into a GUITAR BRIDGE.

ALEX (CONT'D)
THOUGH SOME CAN'T GET USED
TO/SEEING ME WITH SOMEONE WHO
SHARES THE SAME MAKEUP AS YOU.

Alex pulls the mic off the stand and walks down the front row of SCREAMING fans. He smiles.

ALEX (CONT'D)
 /CAN'T GET USED TO/KNOWING WE ARE
 HAPPY WHEN WE'RE ALL TUCKED UP
 WARM/AND ALONE. I GUESS I DON'T
 HAVE TO CARE.

He returns back to the mic stand for the chorus and slams his hands down on the synth.

ALEX (CONT'D)
 AND I WONDER IF YOU WOULD
 CARE./WONDER IF LOVE IS SOMETHING
 YOU'D SHARE/WITH ME.

As they break into the bridge Tom sings back up.

ALEX/TOM
 AND MAYBE I'LL NEVER KNOW./MAYBE
 I'LL NEVER HAVE THE CHANCE TO SHOW/

Alex looks at Tom quickly before focusing back on the audience.

ALEX
 YOU AND MAYBE WE'LL NEVER
 KNOW./MAYBE WE WERE NEVER MEANT TO
 GO THE DISTANCE.

The band stops leaving Alex PLAYING ALONE ON THE KEYBOARD.

ALEX (CONT'D)
 I COULD GET USED TO/SEEING OUR
 REFLECTION AS WE WALK TOGETHER IN
 THE RAIN./COULD GET USED TO/
 KNOWING THERE'S AN END TO ALL THE
 HEARTBREAK AND PAIN.

He PLAYS A FEW FINAL CHORDS.

ALEX (CONT'D)
 I COULD GET USED TO YOU.

The song ends and the crowd erupts into CHEERING AND APPLAUSE.

INT. STUDIO - NIGHT

The fantasy is over - as is the day. Tom presses the stop button on a cassette recorder.

TOM
 Here it is, kids!

KATE
Nailed it!

TOM
Well, fancy a pint at mine?

INT. TOM'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Tom's cassette player is plugged into his guitar amp, playing
ROCK MUSIC.

Kate is relaxing on an armchair, smoking a spliff.

Tom comes in from the kitchen with two cans of beer,

TOM
Doesn't look like my mum's coming
back for a while. Where's Alex?

Kate points in the general direction of the balcony door.

Tom nods and goes out onto

INT. BALCONY - CONTINUOUS

From up here they can see the over the rooftops of Peckham to
where the sun is disappearing over the hills.

Tom hands Alex a beer.

TOM
Good job today, mate.

Alex nods and looks back over city scape.

ALEX
It's beautiful.

TOM
Says the man who lives in a
mansion.

Alex shrugs.

ALEX
Used to, I guess.

Tom pats him on the back.

TOM
Sometimes you've got to let all
that go.

Tom takes a swing of his can.

TOM (CONT'D)
You know, like I did rugby.

Alex turns to look at Tom.

ALEX
What happened?

Tom looks over the edge of the balcony then back to Alex.

TOM
Well, I was in a team, at St Paul's. Fly half. You know it came naturally, even more so than music. But, I developed something of a crush on one of my other team mates and he told the team.

He take another swig.

TOM (CONT'D)
And they came and found me and, well, beat the crap out of me. I became a bit disillusioned with it all after that.

He smiles.

TOM (CONT'D)
So, you know, my life's a real sob story.

ALEX
No kidding.

TOM
But it's okay now because I've got you.

He moves in towards Alex.

ALEX
Tom-

Tom stops.

TOM
What?

ALEX
I'm just, not sure. I really, really like you - but my parents.

Alex moves away from Tom.

TOM

Sometimes I just don't get you, Alex. Your parents treat you like crap but you just do whatever they say. You hate classical music but you do the scholarship because they told you to. You say you like me but you don't want to do anything about it because they don't want you to. When are you going to decide?

A silence. Alex looks out to the horizon.

ALEX

...I ran away, though.

He looks at Tom.

INT. TOM'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Kate takes a puff of her spliff. A LOUD KNOCK on the door.

Kate doesn't move from her seat. She leans towards the balcony and yells.

KATE

Someone's at the door!

No one responds.

Another LOUD RAP on the door.

KATE (CONT'D)

Okay, okay.

Kate gets up from her chair extremely slowly. She staggers over to the door and looks through the peep hole.

Through it she can see Marcus, flanked by a group of GANG MEMBERS.

Kate pulls away from the door and pulls the chain lock across.

KATE (CONT'D)

(Calmly)

Oh, no.

She walks out onto

EXT. BALCONY - CONTINUOUS

KATE
 Sorry to break this up but we may
 have a problem.

She leads them back into

INT. TOM'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Alex hears three KNOCKS consecutively. As he does he begins
 to imagine SEEDY JAZZ MUSIC.

KATE
 We've got company.

As the music climaxes.

MARCUS (O.S.)
 TOM LET US IN/MY PALS AND I'VE
 BEEN/THINKING ABOUT YOUR FAG FRIEND
 IN THERE.

A massive BANG on the door as Marcus rams it.

KATE
 Oh, we may be in trouble.

MARCUS
 WE WANT TO SAY "HI"/AND TALK TO HIM
 WHY/DON'T YOU THINK THAT'S FAIR?

Kate turns around to Tom.

KATE
 I THINK WE SHOULD RUN/THIS ISN'T
 MUCH FUN./

TOM
 I'M THINKING WE SHOULD SPLIT
 DOESN'T SEEM STUPID./

Another bang on the door. The lock begins to stretch.

MARCUS (O.S.)
 NOWHERE TO HIDE/SWALLOW YOUR
 PRIDE./WE DON'T WANT YOU WE JUST
 WANT THE KID.

Another bang and the door swings open. The gang enter. Tom
 and Kate stand between Alex and the gang.

The MUSIC swells and the gang begin to CLICK their fingers and approach the group, walking in time to the music and in formation.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
BOY'S I THINK IT'S/TIME FOR A
BASH/A FAGGOT TO SMASH/IS RIGHT
HERE JUST BEFORE US.

He looks at Tom.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
TOM MOVE ASIDE/JUST GO
OUTSIDE./WE'RE NOT GONNA KILL, JUST
HARM, JUST MAIM, HIM.

Tom glares him down.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
BOY CAN'T YOU SEE./HE'S GONNA BE
JUST FINE./

An UNDERSCORE CONTINUES while Marcus moves to push Tom out of the way.

Tom ducks and rugby tackles him into the other gang members.

He towers over Marcus and rest his foot on him.

TOM
YOU WANT A/PIECE OF HIM FINE/YOU'RE
WASTING YOUR TIME./I'LL BEAT ALL
YOU BOYS DOWN/I'M SICK OF YOUR
SHIT,/MARCUS JUST HIT THE ROAD!

The gang get up to their feet and run back out the door. Marcus glares at Tom before following suit.

The musical fantasy is over, the MUSIC CONCLUDES.

Tom looks around at Kate. He walks over to the door.

TOM (CONT'D)
Kate,

He twists the deadlock on the door.

TOM (CONT'D)
This is how you lock a door.

EXT. CAR PARK - DAY

Alex, Tom and Kate walk up the Volvo. Alex and Tom carry their bags around their shoulders and between them they lift the keyboard. The red paint on the car has been keyed.

TOM
The bastards!

He sets down the keyboard and runs up to his car.

TOM (CONT'D)
Aw, man.

ALEX
I'm really sorry, Tom.

Tom stands and looks around.

TOM
Ah, it's not your fault.

He opens the boot of the car and throws his bag in. They lift the keyboard into the boot.

Alex places his bag in as well before Tom shuts it before getting in the car.

Kate turns to Alex.

KATE
Hey...

She nods her head in Tom's direction.

KATE (CONT'D)
Think about it, okay? I have a feeling you guys could use each other right about now.

Alex nods and gets in the car.

Kate waves as the car pulls out of the parking space and drives away.

INT. COMMON ROOM - NIGHT

Alex and Tom enter with their bags. Mr and Mrs Peal are sitting on a sofa.

PEAL
Ah, boys. You're back. Have a seat.

Alex and Tom exchange a glance and they both sit.

PEAL (CONT'D)
Sarah has had another accident.

Alex's jaw clenches.

PEAL (CONT'D)
And it looks like she may not be able to play at the concert. It's up to her, of course, but I think that the most likely outcome is that she'll drop out of the contest.

Tom frowns.

TOM
What? Can they not postpone the concert?

MRS PEAL
We thought they may be able to but Mr Brackton has been adamant that it wouldn't be possible to reschedule John Standerwick to judge.

Tom stands up.

TOM
I'm going to see her.

Mr Peal waves his hand.

PEAL
Now, now, Tom. It's a little late for that. You'll see her tomorrow, I'm sure. For now I suggest you head upstairs to the dorms.

Alex stands up as well.

PEAL (CONT'D)
Wait a moment, Alex. We want to talk to you.

Tom hesitates.

PEAL (CONT'D)
Alone if that's all right, Tom.

Tom nods. He grabs his bag and heads upstairs. Alex sits back down.

MRS PEAL
We've had a call from your parents,
Alex.

Alex shuffles uncomfortably.

MRS PEAL (CONT'D)
And we feel it's important for us
to say in absolute terms that
running off from them was
irresponsible and wrong.

ALEX
But-

PEAL
No. Now Tom has his part to play in
that too and we'll be speaking to
him as well, and while we can't
punish you for what happens outside
the school I must emphasise how
disappointed we are.

Alex nods.

PEAL (CONT'D)
They told us that they'll be coming
to the concert, perhaps that will
be the time to make it up to them,
yes?

ALEX
Okay.

PEAL
Okay. Off you go then.

Alex gets up and exits.

INT. DORM - NIGHT

Tom sleeps, SNORING.

Alex lies in his bed, eyes wide open. He looks at a clock on
the wall, it's 12:30AM.

Alex closes his eyes but soon afterwards opens them again.

He gets out of his bed and puts on some slippers. He exits
the room.

INT. ALEX'S PRACTICE ROOM - NIGHT

Alex looks at the piece he had been composing before.

He picks up a pencil and scribbles some notes on it.

Behind it, the Liebesträume catches his eye. He pulls it out from behind the manuscript and opens it.

He shuffles on his seat and pushes his glasses up.

He BEGINS TO PLAY.

The first few phrases are quite confident. However he comes up against the scale runs again and falters.

He CRASHES his hand down on the piano.

A shadow falls over Alex at the SOUND OF THE DOOR OPENING.

Alex turns to see George standing over him.

GEORGE

Getting ready for the big day?

He takes a step into the room and lets the door close behind him. He takes a look at the score.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

He really is a beautiful writer,
Liszt, but very tricky.

George sits down on the piano stool by Alex.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Luckily for you, though, you have
access to a scholarship winner. And
we're going to practice now using a
little technique I learned from Mr.
Brackton.

George pulls out his flick knife, the blade not exposed, and holds it to Alex's arm.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

We're going to run through the
piece and if you get a note wrong
Mr Boo is going to have something
to say about it, okay?

Alex nods his head, shaking.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

All right then. Off you go.

Alex sits up.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Good posture. Now, begin.

Alex STARTS PLAYING. He plays deliberately slowly. He just about manages to get to the end of first section.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Good, you see this really works.
And now the run.

Alex looks at the sheet music. He begins to play the run.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Faster!

Alex speeds up, getting visibly more agitated as he tries to concentrate.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Faster!

Alex tries to increase his speed but falls off the rhythm.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Stop.

Alex stops playing the piano. He can't bear to look at George, he just stares at his sheets.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Oh, dear. Oh, dear, oh, dear. That wasn't very good was it. What do you think Mr Boo?

He presses the flick switch and the knife swings out, grazing Alex's arm. Alex GASPS but says nothing.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Aw, he's not very happy. And he's going to come back tomorrow and we're going to run through the piece again and if you haven't got it right by then he's going to be even worse.

George stands up and exits the room.

Alex BURSTS INTO TEARS.

He pulls his sleeve up his arm to reveal a small cut where George sliced him. There's a bead of blood dripping from it.

He looks at the music again and throws it off the piano onto the floor, fuming.

INT. SARAH'S WARD, MEDICAL CENTRE - DAY

Sarah sits on her bed looking through a book of scores.

The DOOR OPENS and she turns to see Alex and Tom enter.

She beams at them.

SARAH
Hey, you guys.

Tom smiles.

TOM
Sarah. Man, are you going through
the wars on this contest?

Sarah throws a glance at Alex.

SARAH
Yeah, who knew flute practice could
be so dangerous?

ALEX
They're saying you won't be able to
play in the contest.

SARAH
Well, Mr Date says there's no way
but I think I could do it. And Mr
Brackton does too -

ALEX
(Coldly)
Does he?

Tom notices Alex demeanour.

TOM
What's going on?

ALEX
Are you going to tell him?

Suddenly, Sarah's happy façade is broken. She sinks into her bed.

TOM
Tell me what's going on?

Music SWELLS up in Alex's head.

Tom sits by the bed.

TOM (CONT'D)
Come on, Sarah.

SARAH
I USED TO THINK I WAS MADE OF
GREATNESS,/AN INDESTRUCTIBLE
MACHINE./BUT NOW I SEE THAT LESS
AND LESS./THAT MAN HAS BROKEN MY
DREAM.

Alex reaches out and touches her hand.

SARAH (CONT'D)
AT FIRST I THOUGHT HE WAS A
GOD./ONE DAY I THOUGHT "THAT COULD
BE ME."/BUT I'VE SEEN THE END OF
THE ROD./AND NOW I JUST WANT TO BE
FREE.

INT. MR BRACKTON'S OFFICE - DAY

The MUSIC PLAYS OVER this scene, the AUDIO FROM THE ROOM IS
WASHED OUT, BARELY AUDIBLE.

Sarah sits on a chair in front of a music stand with her
flute.

Mr Brackton sits behind her, he holds his cane. She plays
well but falters.

Mr Brackton swiftly hits her on the leg with the ruler.

BRACKTON
Again.

She starts from the beginning but falters a second time. Mr
Brackton hits her on the leg with the ruler.

BRACKTON (CONT'D)
Again.

INT. SICK BAY, SARAH'S WARD

SARAH
AND NOW I SEE I'M NOTHING BUT A
COWARD/I HIDE IN HERE UNTIL ITS
TIME TO PLAY./I THOUGHT HERE I
COULD ESCAPE MY HARSH LIFE/BUT IT
SEEMS TO CATCH UP WITH ME ANYWAY.

The MUSIC ENDS. Alex SIGHS.

TOM
Sarah, I had no idea.

ALEX
You should tell someone about him.

Sarah smiles.

SARAH
You should tell someone about
George.

Tom turns to Alex.

TOM
What?

Alex looks at Sarah and then back to Tom.

ALEX
It's possible... that George might
be threatening me.

TOM
You're kidding.

SARAH
He has a knife.

TOM
Guys, I - I'm really sorry. I feel
like such an idiot.

ALEX
It's okay.

A beat.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Because we're going to do something
about it. At the concert.

TOM
You're going to ruin the
scholarship?

ALEX
Why should we perform for them? Who
actually wants the scholarship?

No response.

ALEX (CONT'D)
I'm done with this place, this
contest is a joke and we should
show them what we really feel.

Sarah nods.

TOM
Sounds good to me. What do you want
to do?

Alex smiles.

EXT. CAR PARK - NIGHT

Cars pull up into the carpark as stewards shepherd people
from their cars to the school.

The Mercedes pulls up into the driveway.

Arthur and Mary get out of the car and begin to walk up to
the school.

EXT. BACK ENTRANCE, MAIN SCHOOL BUILDING - NIGHT

Tom leans against a wall and Alex runs out with two scores.

ALEX
Got 'em.

Tom smiles.

TOM
Ha, nice one.

ALEX
Thanks.

TOM
I've set up piano for you.

ALEX

Awesome.

A beat.

TOM

This is all so surprising, coming from you.

ALEX

I thought about what you said. It's time to start taking control.

Tom smiles.

Alex leans in and kisses Tom.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Come on!

He runs into the building.

Tom smiles and follows him.

INT. STEETSON HALL - NIGHT

The room begins to fill with audience members.

At the front is a table set up with a water jug. JOHN STANDERWICK (60) walks to the desk with Mr Brackton.

BRACKTON

...Absolutely thrilled to have you.

STANDERWICK

Of course, my pleasure.

John Standerwick looks at the water.

STANDERWICK (CONT'D)

Is there any chance of something stronger?

The stage has thick black curtains around the back except for where the double doors open onto the stage.

The Steinway has a thick black curtain concealing the space underneath it.

An electric organ is set up on the other side of the stage to the piano.

Members of the orchestra are taking their seats.

INT. CLASSROOM, BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Tom and Alex both sit at a table. They have scores in front of them and scribble onto them.

Sarah sits in the corner, an amused smile on her face.

SARAH

You guys are crazy. I've already decided to file a complaint.

Tom looks up and smiles. Alex continues to draw.

ALEX

Likewise. But what's the harm in having a little fun first.

TOM

You can get involved if you want.

Sarah laughs.

SARAH

No thanks, I'm just here to play.

The DOOR OPENS, Tom and Alex quickly close the scores.

Miss Joan enters. She carries a clipboard.

JOAN

Hello contestants. How are we all?

TOM

We're fine.

ALEX

Great thanks.

Miss Joan nods. She looks down to her clipboard.

JOAN

Well, we're having the duet between Mr Brackton and George first. Then Sarah, you'll play, then Alex, then Tom.

TOM

Saving the best for last, I see.

Miss Joan gives a wry smile.

The FAINT SOUND OF THE ORCHESTRA TUNING can be heard in the room.

JOAN
Something like that. Anyway, John
Standerwick has arrived, we are
starting the concert in ten
minutes.

She exits the room.

Tom and Alex immediately open the scores and continue
writing.

Sarah laughs.

SARAH
You guys.

They write for a little longer before Tom closes his score.

TOM
And that is that.

Alex does likewise.

ALEX
It's a masterpiece.

The DOOR OPENS and George enters. He looks down at the table
and snarls.

GEORGE
My scores.

ALEX
Saving them here for you.

He snatches the scores off the table and exits.

INT. STEETSON HALL - NIGHT

Arthur and Mary take their seats near the front of the
stalls.

The pre-show CHATTER dies as the house lights dim leaving
only the stage illuminated.

Mr Brackton walks onto the stage to a SMATTERING OF APPLAUSE.

BRACKTON
Good evening, ladies and gentlemen.
We are delighted to welcome you
here tonight to Ravenscar College
to enjoy our scholarship
performances.

INT. BACKSTAGE CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Alex, Tom and Sarah peer through a crack in the doors into the music hall.

INT. STEETSON HALL - CONTINUOUS

BRACKTON

Three will perform but only one will be awarded the prestigious music performance scholarship. And this will be judged by John Standerwick, director at the Royal Philharmonic.

He gestures to John Standerwick in the audience and there is another SMATTERING OF LIGHT APPLAUSE.

BRACKTON (CONT'D)

But before we get to that it is my pleasure to accompany George Stittleton, winner of the scholarship last year, who will be performing Markhov's 'Celestial Fantasia'.

George enters the hall and sits at the organ.

Mr Brackton walks to the piano and sits at the organ.

The orchestra members all look around to him. He raises his hand and counts them in.

The orchestra LAUNCH into the fantasia.

As they play George looks down at his sheet music. All is as it should be.

Mr Brackton follows his along and sets his fingers on the sheet music.

INT. BACKSTAGE CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Sarah SIGHS, disappointed.

SARAH

It's the same.

ALEX

Wait, wait. Here it comes.

INT. STEETSON HALL - CONTINUOUS

George and Mr Brackton play perfectly as the piece becomes more complex and crescendos.

INT. BACKSTAGE CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

ALEX

We're going into the main theme now.

INT. STEETSON HALL - CONTINUOUS

The piece climaxes and both George and Mr Brackton turn their pages.

Their eyes grow wide with fear.

George's score has been hand draw, and the stave starts normally screening from left to right, but then droops so it is going vertically down the page.

Mr Brackton's score has alternate stave upside down.

Both players desperately start rotating their scores with one hand, while the other hand tries to keep playing.

Members of the orchestra glance around to see what's going on as they continue to play.

John Standerwick frowns, and then smiles - amused, his water jug has been replaced by a bottle of wine and he's a fair way through.

Another page turn. This time the stave does a u-turn back up the other page and George has to turn the sheet again.

Mr Brackton's music is arranged in a spiral, he desperately tries to rotate the score and continue playing.

INT. BACKSTAGE CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Miss Joan, hearing the music fall apart runs up to the door.

JOAN

What is going on?

ALEX

Honestly, I have no idea.

She tries to suppress a laugh as Mr Brackton plays a series of incorrect notes.

JOAN

Twenty years and I've never heard
him make a mistake.

INT. STEETSON HALL - CONTINUOUS

The orchestra are doing the best at staying together while Mr Brackton and George are now attempting to play scores that are an abominable cluster of notes that make no musical sense.

George is seriously sweating as he attempts to improvise to the music.

Brackton has gone red with fury.

The music comes to an END.

The audience are frozen. John Standerwick's mouth hangs open.

Mr Brackton's mouth opens but no words come out.

Arthur turns to Mary.

ARTHUR

He's not as good as I remember him.

George takes his music and shuffles off stage, his head hung.

Mr Brackton storms out of the hall into

INT. BACKSTAGE CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Alex, Tom, Sarah and Miss Joan all get out of the way of the door as Mr Brackton charges through it.

BRACKTON

Who did this?!

Silence. Mr Brackton turns to Sarah.

BRACKTON (CONT'D)

You. I know it was you.

He rounds on her but Alex and Tom step between them.

JOAN

Mr Brackton calm yourself, why
would Sarah do anything like that?

BRACKTON

Because-

He stops himself. He looks over the three of them.

BRACKTON (CONT'D)

I've never seen a collection of such disgraceful musicians in all my life.

ALEX

That's devastating, sir.

Mr Brackton SNARLS before marching out of the corridor.

The orchestra begin to clear out. Miss Joan enters

INT. STEETSON HALL - CONTINUOUS

She walks to the front of the stage.

JOAN

Ladies and Gentlemen, I will be compering for the rest of the evening as Mr Brackton is... fatigued after that last performance. Our next performer is Sarah Nicks and she'll be playing Fauré - Sonata No. 1 in A Major arranged for flute.

INT. BACKSTAGE AREA - CONTINUOUS

Sarah turns to Alex and Tom.

SARAH

I guess this is it...

ALEX

You'll be great.

TOM

Yeah, go out and win a scholarship, will ya?

INT. STEETSON HALL - CONTINUOUS

Sarah walks out onto the stage and sits on a chair behind a music stand.

Miss Joan sits at the piano to accompany her.

Sarah BEGINS TO PLAY. It's a beautiful, delicate rendition. The audience look up at her delighted.

INT. BACKSTAGE AREA - CONTINUOUS

TOM
She's amazing.

Alex nods.

TOM (CONT'D)
But I guess we knew that already.

He smiles.

INT. STEETSON HALL - CONTINUOUS

John Standerwick scribbles furiously as Sarah continues to captivate the audience.

She moves with a delicate grace as her fingers dance across the keys.

Miss Joan smiles as she accompanies on the keyboard.

Sarah leans into the music, getting more and more engrossed.

She then stands up and begins to play out to the audience. Suddenly she plays with a ferocity hitherto unseen.

The audience stare up, amazed.

INT. BACKSTAGE CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Alex looks at Sarah, and then down to the audience he notices his parents.

ALEX
My parents are not gonna like
what's coming next.

Tom puts his arm around Alex. Alex looks at him and smiles.

ALEX (CONT'D)
But that's okay.

INT. STEETSON HALL - CONTINUOUS

Sarah comes to the end of her piece.

The audience burst into APPLAUSE.

She beams and nods her head in pride.

Miss Joan turns around on her piano and smiles.

Alex and Tom rush into the room and hug her.

ALEX
That was amazing.

TOM
You were so good.

Sarah looks at them with tear filled eyes.

SARAH
Thanks so much, guys.

They break apart.

ALEX
I think it's time to end this.

Sarah nods. Tom smiles.

Alex walks to the centre of the stage.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Thank you so much for coming to
watch us play tonight. The other
contestants and I have been talking
and we have decided that we will be
forfeiting the contest.

A MURMUR spreads throughout the audience.

ALEX (CONT'D)
But, if you'll allow us, we'd like
to keep performing.

Alex looks down at John Standerwick, his wine bottle now almost completely empty. He has one glass left, which he raises to Alex.

Alex takes a mic from the stage and crosses over to the piano with it.

He sets it down by the piano and sits.

ALEX (CONT'D)
This is a piece I wrote during the
contest.

He begins to PLAY the intro.

The music is calm and measured.

Alex closes his eyes, absorbed by the music. Any lack of emotion from his playing before has now vanished.

ALEX (CONT'D)
 TRYING TO KNOW HOW,/TO FIND THE
 WORDS NOW./FOR YOU, FOR YOU.

He looks at Tom, who smiles back at him.

ALEX (CONT'D)
 YOU BESIDE ME,/LOCKED INSIDE
 ME./THE ONE WHO SET ME FREE.

Sarah puts her flute to her lips and begins to play along with him.

Tom now has his bass and is playing too.

ALEX (CONT'D)
 YOU'VE HELPED ME REALISE/WHO I CAN
 BE,/I HOPE I HELPED YOU TOO.

The three contestants play the bridge together. A moment of harmony as they are all perfectly synchronised.

ALEX (CONT'D)
 WE'RE COMING HOME NOW./WE'VE
 MADE/IT THROUGH HOW,/DID WE, DOUBT
 US?

Alex smiles.

ALEX (CONT'D)
 WE'RE ALL LOSERS,/WE'RE ALL
 WINNERS./WE'VE FINALLY MADE IT
 THROUGH.

The three come together once again as they complete the piece.

A moment of SILENCE before the audience burst into applause.

Arthur and Mary exchange a look, and then join the applause.

As the applause DIES DOWN -

ALEX (CONT'D)
 We have one more for you.

Alex takes pause before beginning to PLAY the Liszt.

Arthur perks up.

Tom slips behind the black curtain with Sarah.

Alex gets about ten seconds in before stopping.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Actually, you know what, I have a better idea.

Alex leans back and looks under the piano.

The synthesiser keyboard from Tom's studio sits under the piano.

Alex smiles.

He takes one last look over the audience and PLAYS THE SYNTH HOOK.

He then hears the SOUND OF DRUM STICKS BEING STRUCK TOGETHER.

KATE (O.S.)

One two three four!

The black curtains part to reveal Kate on the drums, Alex on guitar and Sarah playing a flute solo.

They all come in for the intro to the song.

Alex turns around to look at Kate amaze.

ALEX

(To Kate)

You came!

Kate smiles.

KATE

Wouldn't have missed it, man.

ALEX

I CAN'T GET USED TO/SEEING YOU AND
KNOWING THAT I GET TO SPEND TIME
WITH YOU./CAN'T GET USED TO/KNOWING
THAT OUT OF ALL THE PEOPLE OUT
THERE I'M THE ONE THAT YOU/ARE
WASTING YOUR TIME WITH.

In Alex's imagination the stage is engulfed in flashing rock show style lights.

The audience stand up and start dancing like crazy.

ALEX (CONT'D)
 AND I WONDER IF YOU FEEL THE SAME
 AS ME./WONDER IF YOU THINK A BOY
 LIKE ME COULD,/LOVE A BOY LIKE YOU.

As the band play the verse break Tom gets a second mic and stands behind it.

ALEX/TOM
 THOUGH SOME CAN'T GET USED
 TO/SEEING ME WITH SOMEONE WHO
 SHARES THE SAME MAKEUP AS YOU/CAN'T
 GET USED TO/KNOWING WE ARE HAPPY
 WHEN WE'RE ALL TUCKED UP WARM /AND
 ALONE. I GUESS I DON'T HAVE TO
 CARE.

Alex turns to Tom.

ALEX
 AND I WONDER IF YOU WOULD
 CARE./WONDER IF LOVE IS SOMETHING
 YOU'D SHARE/WITH ME./AND MAYBE I'LL
 NEVER KNOW./MAYBE I'LL NEVER HAVE
 THE CHANCE TO SHOW/YOU AND MAYBE
 WE'LL NEVER KNOW./MAYBE WE WERE
 NEVER MEANT TO GO THE DISTANCE.

Alex switches to the piano for the last verse but as he opens his mouth Tom takes over.

TOM
 I COULD GET USED TO/SEEING OUR
 REFLECTION AS WE WALK TOGETHER IN
 THE RAIN./COULD GET USED TO/KNOWING
 THERE'S AN END TO ALL THE
 HEARTBREAK AND PAIN.

Alex turns around and looks at Tom.

ALEX/TOM
 I COULD GET USED TO YOU.

They END THE SONG.

There's an eruption of cheering and applause.

Alex gets off the piano and runs to Tom and they embrace.

The musical fantasy is over.

The audience are no longer partying. But they have all stood, APPLAUDING VIGOROUSLY.

John Standerwick, now without any more wine, cheers.

Sarah, Kate, Tom and Alex take to the centre of the stage and bow.

Alex smiles as he sees the applauding faces in front of him.

He looks at Sarah, who is beaming proudly, and then Tom, who leans towards him.

TOM

I don't think we're getting
admitted.

ALEX

They wanted music. They got music.

He looks back into the audience.

The four of them hold hands and bow one last time.

THE END

References

Eccles, H. (1720). Sonata. [Sheet Music] New York: IMC

Fauré, G. (1875). Sonata no 1 in A Major. [Sheet Music]. Arr. Scott Hurley. York: Unpublished

Hodgson, R. (1974). Dreamer. [CD, Lyric Insert] London: A&M.

Hurley, S. (2014). A Lonely House. [Musical Theatre Libretto] *Beach*. York:

Unpublished Liszt, F. (1850) Liebesträume III. [Sheet Music]. Arr. Scott Hurley. York:

Unpublished. Rhodes, N. (1982). Hungry Like the Wolf. [CD, Lyric Insert] London: EMI Capitol.

Sondheim, S. (1987) No One Is Alone. [Musical Theatre Piano/Conductor's Score]. Riltling Music, inc.