

"FAME"

"Parent Pressure"

(aka "Bruno's Song")

#2703

by

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FIRST DRAFT

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"FAME"

"Parent Pressure"

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

COCO, JULIE, and DORIS are on the school's front steps, watching a grinning MONTGOMERY weave his way across the street, carrying a portable cassette player in one hand, as the other hand waves a cassette tape over his head in triumph. The girls rush to meet him.

DORIS
You actually got it?

MONTGOMERY
(proudly)
Ask a miracle, get a miracle.

He lets them admire the prize as:

COCO
Who'd you have to bribe?

MONTGOMERY
Bribe? It was practically a gift.
I paid straight retail.

COCO
Stop bragging and let's hear
it.

JULIE
She's right. Can we hear it
please?

Montgomery starts to take the tape out of its package and place it in the player.

COCO
Hold it. LeRoy should get in
on this. Somebody find LeRoy.

She looks commandingly at Doris, who sighs unhappily.

DORIS
Just once can somebody else be
'somebody'?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MONTGOMERY

Don't worry. When LeRoy hears this,
he'll find us.

Montgomery has now slid the tape into place. He pushes the start button commandingly and the air is suddenly filled with the B-52's "DANCE THIS MESS AROUND". Coco begins moving happily to the punk beat.

COCO

Now that's damaging!

The others watch happily as Coco gets more and more into the song.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

LEROY and GARCY are sitting in a booth having danish, coffee, and a slight argument.

GARCY

Forget it, LeRoy. You can't copy my report.

LEROY

Garcy, I got to be honest. If I have to ask a second time, I might...forget our friendship.

He underlines the verbal threat by looking more mean than Joe Green. Garcy gulps, and tries to smile disarmingly.

GARCY

You didn't wait for my punch line. You'll break up. You can't copy my report because I handed it in three days ago. When it was due.

SHERWOOD (v.o.)

And I appreciated it, Garcy.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Garcy and LeRoy turn to discover MISS SHERWOOD standing up from the booth behind them.

GARCY

Good Morning, Miss Sherwood.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHERWOOD

It was a better morning before
I heard this conversation.

She looks challengingly at LeRoy.

SHERWOOD

(continuing)

LeRoy...you have had your last
extension. You promised that report
at the beginning of class this
morning. I expect to see it. Your
original. No copies.

LeRoy stares sullenly.

SHERWOOD

(continuing)

I suggest you go right to the
library and not waste another
minute.

GARCY

Right, Miss Sherwood.

Garcy grabs LeRoy's arm and pulls him off toward the
front door, grateful to escape. LeRoy shakes loose and
glares at him.

ON SHERWOOD

She unhappily watches the boys' departure for a beat,
then sits back in her booth and we now see that she
has been accompanied to the coffee shop by LYDIA GRANT.

LYDIA

(grinning)

Why do I get this feeling you
are having a few little doubts
about recommending LeRoy as
Class Valedictorian?

SHERWOOD

(grimly)

He's handed in exactly 25% of
his English assignments. And if
I took off all I should for his
spelling and grammar on those papers,
I'd have to give him less than
a zero.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LYDIA

(brightly)

Maybe he figures he's ahead of the game if he doesn't hand in anything.

SHERWOOD

I'm sorry, but I can't find LeRoy's behavior amusing any more.

LYDIA

Getting to you, huh?

SHERWOOD

No, LeRoy and I are well into the past tense...imperfect. I believe the expression is 'had it to here'.

LYDIA

You ready to expel him?

(then, quickly)

Before you answer that, I have one thing to offer in his defense. He's definitely not failing my classes. Oh, he'd dance a lot better without that log on his shoulder, but even then, I give him 'A's'.

SHERWOOD

Then what should I do? LeRoy and I can't go on this way.

Lydia considers for a moment, then:

LYDIA

Have you talked to his parents?

SHERWOOD

No. He never invites them to any school functions. I've never even met them.

LYDIA

Might be a good time to change that.

SHERWOOD

Might be.

(smiling)

Thanks, Lydia.

Sherwood is looking cheered and hopeful.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

A crowd of students has gathered around Montgomery's cassette player to listen and watch as Coco joins in to dance and sing along with the tape:

COCO

(singing)

'Dance this mess around
Dance this mess around 'round 'round.
Everybody goes to parties
They dance this mess around.
They do the Shu-ga-loo
Do the Shy Tuna
Do the Camel Walk
Do the Hip-O-crit.
Ah Hippy Hippy forward Hippy Hippy
Hippy Shake, Hippy Shake.'

Now we see LeRoy move in to join Coco in a duet.

LEROY

(singing)

'Oh, it's time to do 'em right.
Hey now, don't that make you feel
a whole lot better?'

COCO

'Huh?'

LEROY

I say, don't that make you feel
a whole lot better?'

COCO

'What you say?'

LEROY

'I'm just askin'.'

COCO/LEROY

'Shake-Bake-Shake-Bake'

ANOTHER ANGLE

BRUNO gets out of his father's cab and threads his way to the music.

BACK TO PRODUCTION NUMBER

More of the kids have now joined Coco and LeRoy around the blaring cassette player as they dance on the sidewalk, up the stairs, etc.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

COCO/LEROY
(singing)

'Everybody goes to parties
They dance this mess around.
They do all 16 dances
Do the Coo-ca-choo
Do the Acqua-Velva
Do the Dirty Dog
Do the Escalator.'

ANGLE ON BRUNO

Looking bored and disapproving as he watches.

BACK TO PRODUCTION NUMBER

Coco and LeRoy are really into it.

COCO/LEROY

'Ah Hippy Hippy forward Hippy Hippy
Hippy Shake, Hippy Shake.
Yeah, Yeah, Yeah.
Stop!
Dance on over.
Yeah, Yeah.
Dance, dance, dance this mess around.
Dance this mess around.
Shake, shake-a-bake shake.'

ANGLE ON SHERWOOD AND LYDIA

As they arrive on the scene and note that LeRoy is completely involved in the dance. As Sherwood looks considerably un-cheered:

LYDIA

You're right. This isn't
the library.

CUT TO:

CLOSE ON CASSETTE PLAYER

It is now totally silent, and as we PULL BACK, we hear:

BRUNO (v.o.)

(reciting archly)

'Ah Hippy Hippy forward Hippy Hippy
shake, Hippy shake.'

INT. MUSIC ROOM - DAY

We now discover that we are in the music room where Bruno is talking to Montgomery.

BRUNO

Little sacharine for a love lyric, isn't it?

MONTGOMERY

Don't knock it, Bruno. That tape has been sold out in every store this side of Jersey for three weeks. If my mother hadn't called to reserve one for me, I never would have got it.

BRUNO

And your cultural life would have been totally impoverished.

MONTGOMERY

Look, I know it's not exactly your kind of music...

BRUNO

Did you say 'music'? 'Hippy Hippy forward?'

MONTGOMERY

You have to admit, it's catchy.

BRUNO

So is herpes.

MONTGOMERY

I read in Cash Box that the album went platinum.

BRUNO

I don't care if it goes chopped liver. All you have to do to turn out a song like that is to turn off your mind.

MONTGOMERY

It couldn't be that easy.

BRUNO

Couldn't it? Listen.

He moves to the piano.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BRUNO

(continuing)

Tell me the first words that
come to your mind.

MONTGOMERY

Uh...

As Montgomery is trying to think of something, SHOROSSKY, the
elderly music instructor enters the classroom, unseen
by Bruno.

MONTGOMERY

(continuing, startled)

...Mr. Shorossky!

As Shorossky acknowledge this with a curt nod, Bruno
looks inspired.

BRUNO

Why not?

Bruno begins pounding out a punk rhythm and begins to
ad lib a lyric.

BRUNO

(singing)

Sho...Sho...Sho...Shorossky!

Montgomery looks very uneasy as Shorossky moves into
the room to investigate. Bruno is totally unaware
of the teacher's presence as he focuses on the keyboard,
unhooks his mind, and creates his put-down of punk,
singing with increasing sarcasm.

BRUNO

(singing)

La...La...La...the bossky!

Grow a beard.

Act so wierd.

Ooobla Ooobla Lost Key.

Be a square.

Friz your hair.

Sho...Sho...Sho...Shorossky!

ON MONTGOMERY

Looking increasingly worried as a frowning Shorossky
heads across the room toward the unsuspecting Bruno.

CUT TO:

INT. ENGLISH CLASS. - DAY

Miss Sherwood is confronting LeRoy.

SHERWOOD

A teacher has certain responsibilities,
LeRoy.

LeRoy regards her impassively.

SHERWOOD

(continuing)

And one of those responsibilities
is to use every available resource
to assist a student in performing
up to standard. Do you understand?

LEROY

Not yet. But I figure somethin's
comin'.

SHERWOOD

Something, LeRoy. Something I
should have considered much earlier.
(then)

I want to discuss your academic
problems with your parents.

LeRoy looks overly uncomfortable.

LEROY

Who?

SHERWOOD

Your mother and father.

(picks up card)

I notice from your records that
they do not have a telephone, so
I would appreciate you're delivering
this note setting an appointment
here at the school tomorrow
afternoon.

LEROY

(desperate)

They...they both work.

SHERWOOD

I will arrange to stay here as
long as necessary -- into the
evening, if that is more convenient.

LEROY

(checkmated)

The evening?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHERWOOD

It is imperative to your future
in this school that your parents
and I discuss your behavior.

LEROY

Look, Miss Sherwood, I know I've
been goofing off. I won't anymore.
You don't have to bother my parents.

SHERWOOD

Yes, LeRoy, I do.

She gives him the note.

SHERWOOD

(continuing)

You have them here tomorrow.
I mean it.

LeRoy takes the note reluctantly and for the first time,
we see his facade vanish and the fear show naked.

INT. MUSIC ROOM - DAY

Bruno is uncomfortably trying to explain his song to
Mr. Shorossky.

BRUNO

It was nothing personal, Mr.
Shorossky, believe me. I was
putting down punk music, not
you.

MONTGOMERY

Right. He could have used any
teacher's name.

Bruno frowns a message that his buddy should stop trying
to help.

BRUNO

I could have used numbers...
sounds. Your name was only a
random accident, because I was
showing Montgomery that the basic
structure of punk rock is barely
beyond the border of random accident.

SHOROSSKY

(turns)

And did he convince you, Montgomery?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MONTGOMERY

Well, Yes. I have to admit it sounded really...random.

SHOROSSKY

In that case, my name was used in a good cause.

MONTGOMERY

Sir?

SHOROSSKY

I detest that cacaphony.

BRUNO

Cacaphony. That's a very accurate description.

SHOROSSKY

I am pleased that we finally agree on something. I find the entire punk phenomenon mindless and disgusting.

BRUNO

Exactly what I was trying to prove to Montgomery with my song.

SHOROSSKY

Well, it was disgusting.

BRUNO

Yessir, it was. Disgusting.

Shorossky grunts an acknowledgement and heads off. Bruno sighs relief. Then:

MONTGOMERY

And fascinating, Bruno. Fascinating.

Bruno frowns, but Montgomery's wheels are turning and his eyes brighten with intrigue.

INT. DANCE ROOM - DAY

LeRoy is all alone in the deserted dance room, trying to sort out his brooding problem. After a few moments, he goes to the bar and begins to stretch, then to move, as though he could overcome the inner turmoil with sheer motion. It doesn't work. He stops. He sits. He's immobilized again by whatever terror it is that Sherwood's ultimatum has caused.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Montgomery opens the door and sticks his head in to call:

MONTGOMERY

Hey, LeRoy! I have this project you might be interested in.

LEROY

Get lost.

MONTGOMERY

Sure, LeRoy. I'm lost. Maybe next time.

He beats a hasty retreat, closing the door as though he needs its protection against the intensity of LeRoy's mood. After a beat or two of staring at the door, LeRoy resolves something and heads for it.

EXT. SLUM STREET - DAY

This is the most South-Bronxlike area of Watts that our location manager can find without getting mugged. We pickup LeRoy as he moves down the trash-lined sidewalk, past the graffitied walls, and finally arrives at the entrance to a deserted storefront, where two street toughs are completing the sale of a shoplifted muscatel bottle to an aging wino. The two sidewalk entrepreneurs are slightly older than LeRoy and their names are MURPHY and DAVIS. As the wino weaves off, the dominant of the two acknowledges LeRoy's arrival.

MURPHY

Hey, man. You're early.

DAVIS

Yeah. Maybe we better sell you a good watch.

MURPHY

Good thinkin'. What kind of watch can we get you, LeRoy?

LEROY

Don't need a watch.

MURPHY

We'll get you a clock radio.

DAVIS

Yeah, LeRoy. You could wake up dancin'.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LEROY
I need a note.

MURPHY
Note?

LEROY
Yeah.

MURPHY
What kind of note?

LEROY
To this certain teacher.

DAVIS
You're kiddin'! 'Please excuse
LeRoy?'
(he laughs)

LEROY
Not that. It's got to be real
good. It's got to say they
can't come to the school.

MURPHY
Who can't?

LEROY
My folks. My Mom and Dad.

MURPHY
Your folks? Yours?

He laughs. But his partner is looking startled and
worried.

DAVIS
That's risky, LeRoy. It's gonna
cost.

LEROY
So?

MURPHY
So you'll get a note.

For the first time since his meeting with Sherwood,
LeRoy is able to smile.

INT. MUSIC ROOM - DAY

Montgomery, Coco, Doris, Julie and Garcy are all
clustered around Bruno.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BRUNO

You guys just want to get me in trouble.

MONTGOMERY

You heard Shorossky. He said you were using his name for a good cause.

GARCY

Besides, Shorossky doesn't have to know about it.

JULIE

Right. We promise not to say a word.

DORIS

A word about what?

GARCY

Bruno's song.

DORIS

What song? I thought this was a committee meeting to discuss ticket sales for the museum tour.

JULIE

That's tomorrow Doris.

DORIS

Ah. Tomorrow. No wonder you all seemed crazy.

COCO

Come on, Bruno. Sing it. We can all use a few laughs.

BRUNO

Frankly, Coco, I'm not sure that you'll find it very funny. It's a put-down of something you really like.

COCO

You know me better than that. I can handle satire.

MONTGOMERY

Actually, maybe Coco will find it very enlightening. I mean...I was enlightened.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

COCO

Sure, Bruno. Our minds are open.
Spread a little enlightenment.

GARCY

Yeah. Spread.

BRUNO

Well, I guess it's the only way
I can get you all off my back.

He moves to the piano.

MONTGOMERY

Somebody lock the door. Doris?

DORIS

I'm not even supposed to be here.

But she goes to lock the door, looking unhappy.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Bruno sits at the piano and begins to play his satire
of punk music. --

BRUNO

(singing)

Sho...Sho...Sho...Shorossky!

La...La...La...the bossky!

Grow a beard.

Act so wierd.

Ocoobla Ocoobla Lost Key.

Be a square.

Friz your hair.

Sho...Sho...Sho...Shorossky!

The kids are all laughing and applaud.

COCO

More, Bruno. More!

MONTGOMERY

Yeah, Bruno. Give us more!

BRUNO

Okay...Okay...

He begins to pound out more of the melody.

ON MONTGOMERY

He stealthily reaches down and adjusts the volume on his cassette recorder. When he looks up, he finds Doris staring at him.

DORIS
You're taping this?

MONTGOMERY
Shhh!

DORIS
Why are you taping this, Montgomery?

MONTGOMERY
None of your business.

ON BRUNO

As he continues to ad lib his parody.

BRUNO
(singing)
Sho...Sho...Sho...Shorossky!
Crossky...Crossky...Crossky.
Rock your Bach.
Talk your schlock.
Sho...Sho...Sho...Shorossky!

ON MONTGOMERY

Looking very conspiratorial as he adjusts the volume and glares at the curious Doris.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. SCHOOL CORRIDOR - DAY

Heavy traffic as the students move to class.

STUDENT VOICE #1

(singing)

Sho...Sho...Sho...Shorossky!

STUDENT VOICE #2

What's that?

STUDENT VOICE #2

You mean you haven't heard?

INT. ENGLISH CLASS - DAY

The first few eager arrivals are moving to their seats as LeRoy stands before Miss Sherwood at her desk. She finishes reading a note and looks at him.

SHERWOOD

All right, LeRoy. I'll give you the benefit of the doubt.

LEROY

(grins)

Knew you'd understand.

SHERWOOD

Oh, I do, LeRoy. I do. So don't push your luck. What I mean is...despite all the suspicious vibrations I am getting from this epistle...I will not at this moment accuse you of forgery.

LEROY

(indignant)

Accuse what?

SHERWOOD

LeRoy, I am meeting you half way. Be there.

(then)

Obviously, if your parents actually did get my message and actually sent this response, they did not understand its importance. They must meet with

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHERWOOD
(continuing)

me. In person. Tomorrow at
four. No excuses. Especially
this one.

She hands the forged note back. LeRoy stares at her,
finally gives in before her commanding gaze, and
retreats to his seat.

ANGLE ON DOORWAY

Entering in the increasing stream of students is a
pre-occupied Bruno, studying a chamber music score
as he navigates with scholar's radar into class.
Just as he gets inside the door, Montgomery arrives
and pulls him into the hall.

INT. SCHOOL CORRIDOR - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Bruno looks upset as Montgomery keeps tugging at him.

BRUNO

Hey, careful. You made me
lose my place.

MONTGOMERY

Forget your place. You gotta
hear this.

He continues leading Bruno to a quiet corner.

BRUNO

Would you knock this off? - We're
going to be late.

MONTGOMERY

Who cares?
(beaming with
excitement)
They love you, Bruno.

BRUNO

Sherwood loves nobody.

MONTGOMERY

Not Sherwood. They.

BRUNO

What they?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MONTGOMERY
The Psychic Powers.

BRUNO
Montgomery, I have no time for this. You're into selling horoscopes, right? Well, I'm not interested.

MONTGOMERY
You will be if you just listen. I'm talking about the real Psychic Powers.

BRUNO
(disgusted)
Oh, the real psychic powers. That's different.

MONTGOMERY
The ones that just signed a development deal with New Wave Records.

BRUNO
You mean somebody's putting horoscopes on records? Now that's decadent.

MONTGOMERY
Would you focus? Right here. For just ten seconds? The Psychic Powers is a new punk rock group. The lead singer is the son of my mother's hair stylist. And last night I played them your Shorossky song.

BRUNO
You what?
(then)
How?

MONTGOMERY
Let's just skip the details. I did it for your own good. And I'm telling you, Bruno, it paid off even better than I thought it would.

BRUNO
Could we please go back to the details? I don't think I'm going to like them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MONTGOMERY

Listen, you're going to love all the Powers. They're great. And after they heard you on the tape, they said you're exactly what they're looking for.

BRUNO

They're looking for me?

MONTGOMERY

Yeah. You fill every requirement. You play great keyboard. Your voice is just the right kind of obnoxious and you show great potential as a songwriter.

BRUNO

This is very funny stuff, Montgomery. Why don't you sell it to Garcy as a standup routine?

MONTGOMERY

But it's true. Every word of it. I just got you a great gig with one of the most promising groups in all of punk music.

BRUNO

I'm a serious symphonic artist. Forget it.

MONTGOMERY

We can't. I already committed you to meet the guys right after school.

BRUNO

I have no desire to meet any 'Psychic Powers'.

MONTGOMERY

Not even for me and my future?

BRUNO

Not really.

MONTGOMERY

Not even to talk bucks?

BRUNO

Bucks?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Montgomery nods eagerly. Bruno is thinking.

INT. DANCE CLASS - DAY

The class is warming up free form at the exercise bar and Bruno is behind Coco, carrying on a soto conversation.

COCO

What kind of favor?

LEROY

Phone call.

COCO

If you think I'm going to fix you up with some girl, your warming-up hasn't reached your brain.

LEROY

It's nothin' like that. I need you to call Sherwood.

COCO

I doubt if Sherwood will go out with you, even if I ask her.

LEROY

Listen to me. She can't know it's you. She's gotta think you're my mother.

COCO

Ma? Your mother?

LEROY

You could pull it off. You just tell her you're my mother and you can't come to school tomorrow, but you'll give me a good talking-to.

COCO

I'll give you a good talking-to right now. That's a stupid idea. You'll get us both kicked out of here.

LEROY

You mean you won't do it?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

COCO

Not on your life. Just let
your mother come see Sherwood
and take your lumps.

LEROY

Thanks a lot. Just don't come
to me when you're going under.

He stalks angrily away to the far end of the warm-up
line, and glares angrily at the puzzled Coco.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. REHEARSAL HALL - DAY

Montgomery is introducing Bruno to a punk rocker in
his mid-twenties. His name is ROGER and he's in an
all-black jumpsuit and heavy shades. He is accompanied
by two female Blondie-types and an Ivy-Leaguer with a
pink crewcut.

ROGER

Bruno. Great name for the
album notes. Wish I'd thought
of it.

(testing the sound)

Bruu-noh!

(then)

Sounds vicious. I love it.

BRUNO

Uh...thanks.

ROGER

And that was a great song, Bruno.
Great.

BRUNO

You mean it didn't offend you?

ROGER

Oh, it offended me. Totally.
That's the beauty of it. I'd
like to have you keep working on
it and maybe we can include it
in our demo tapes and eventually
get it into the album.

MONTGOMERY

Fantastic, Roger. For the usual
royalties, of course?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROGER

Why not?

As Montgomery looks triumphant, Roger walks around Bruno, studying him, then:

ROGER

(continuing)

He's everything you said he was, Monty.

MONTGOMERY

Would I steer you wrong?

ROGER

(turns to others)

What do you think, troops?

His sidemen nod agreement.

ROGER

(continuing)

That settles it.

(puts arm around
Bruno)

Welcome to 'Psychic Powers',
Bruno.

BRUNO

Uh...

ROGER

He's hesitating, Montgomery.

MONTGOMERY

It's happening so fast, Roger.
We haven't even talked about money.

ROGER

Money? Didn't I? That's no
problem. Equal share.

MONTGOMERY

Fantastic.

BRUNO

Montgomery...

MONTGOMERY

Bruno...just relax. Enjoy it.
You're going to be rich.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROGER

He's right, Bruno. You've just signed on for a trip to the top.

Bruno looks bewildered. Then, finally, he smiles hesitatingly as Montgomery, Roger, and the rest of the Psychic Powers move in to congratulate him. The top, huh? Bruno is getting intrigued by the idea.

INT. SCHOOL CORRIDOR - DAY

The halls are deserted. We move past the snail-paced custodian as he picks up the debris of the long school day to arrive at:

INT. ENGLISH CLASS - DAY

An impatient Sherwood waits at her desk with a stone-faced LeRoy who sits, arms folded, in the front row of student chairs. Sherwood checks her watch.

SHERWOOD

Are you sure your parents are coming?

LEROY

Positive.

SHERWOOD

You did tell them five o'clock?

LEROY

Yes, Miss Sherwood. They'll be here.

There is a long beat while Sherwood looks more dubious and LeRoy maintains his stoic assurance.

LEROY

(continuing, finally)

...Unless there was a subway crash or something.

Miss Sherwood regards him for a disappointed moment, then sighs.

SHERWOOD

It won't work, LeRoy. If your parents won't come see me, I'm going to them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LEROY
(panicked)

When?

SHERWOOD

Just as soon as I can arrange
it.

Sherwood picks up her bag and briefcase and leaves the
classroom. LeRoy sits in his chair, looking trapped.

INT. TAXICAB - NIGHT

Bruno is driving with his father.

BRUNO

And Montgomery says that if I
wind up with a couple songs on
their album, I could make enough
to buy all the instruments I
want and take off a couple years
to compose whatever I want.

BRUNO'S DAD

Or pay for Julliard?

BRUNO

If I wanted.

BRUNO'S DAD

You want.

BRUNO

Maybe. We'll see. It's going
to take a lot of thinking about.

BRUNO'S DAD

What's to think about? Do you
realize how many million musicians
would kill for a break like this?

BRUNO

That's their problem. I'm not
all that sure that the timing
is right for me.

BRUNO'S DAD

Listen to me, Bruno. When luck
strikes, you go with luck's
timing. You don't argue about
personal convenience.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BRUNO
Then you wouldn't care?

BRUNO'S DAD
About what?

BRUNO
That Roger says to be fair to
the band, I'd have to leave
school.

BRUNO'S DAD
Leave school?

BRUNO
Yeah. When they start rehearsals
next week.

Bruno's father joins Bruno in uncertainty.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Sherwood and Lydia Grant are finishing breakfast. Lydia
is studying LeRoy's registration card. She shakes her
head with concern.

LYDIA
I don't know. You ever been
in this neighborhood?

SHERWOOD
No.

LYDIA
Well, I have. And I wouldn't
go back without taking a couple
of my big brothers and my cousin
who plays for the Rams.

SHERWOOD
You have to be exaggerating.

LYDIA
Not much. Look, why don't you
wait till Friday when I can
go with you.

SHERWOOD
Thanks, Lydia, but I don't think
I should wait that long. LeRoy

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHERWOOD

(continuing)

has worked so hard to keep me away from his parents, that I'm sure they're the key to all this and I want to settle it.

LYDIA

Maybe LeRoy is really afraid of them.

SHERWOOD

What do you mean?

Lydia hands her back the address card.

LYDIA

In that part of town, you either keep people scared, or you don't stay.

Lydia looks from the card to Lydia with worried eyes.

INT. SCHOOL CORRIDOR - DAY

Bruno is surrounded by Coco, Julie, Garcy, and Doris.

GARCY

Hey, man, congratulations!

COCO

Does your group need a chick singer? I'm prepared to go blonde.

JULIE

It's fabulous, Bruno. It's so...New York.

Bruno tries to conduct the group into silence.

BRUNO

Hold it. Just back off. I don't know what Montgomery has told you and the world, but things aren't really decided yet.

GARCY

What's to decide?

BRUNO

Well, for one thing, I'd have to drop out of school.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

COCO

But just look what you're dropping into.

GARCY

Yeah, Bruno. You gotta go for it.

DORIS

Yeah, Bruno. Just think...

As Doris chatters on, we see Shorossky coming up the stairs in time to hear:

DORIS

(continuing)

...when your Shorossky song is on the charts, I can say the first time it played to an audience, I closed the door.

Shorossky's radar reacts.

SHOROSSKY

What charts?

He moves toward the group, but the group is dissolving.

COCO

See you, Bruno.

The kids vanish, leaving Bruno looking uncomfortably at Shorossky.

SHOROSSKY

What's this all about, Bruno? 'My' song is going to be on what charts?

BRUNO

Doris was just babbling, sir.

SHOROSSKY

If my name is being babbled, I am entitled to know why.

BRUNO

Well...there's this new musical group...and they like 'your' ...'my'...'our'...song.

SHOROSSKY

They like it?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BRUNO

Yessir.

SHOROSSKY

Insanity!

BRUNO

It is kind of crazy.

SHOROSSKY

Thank heavens, Bruno, that you are safely in school and that you have the intelligence and strength of character to stay completely away from crazies like that.

And he heads away, leaving Bruno looking unsettled.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SLUM STREET - DAY

We are back in LeRoy's South-Bronx-like neighborhood.

ANGLE ON SHERWOOD

She is trying to look brave as she walks past the desolate buildings, the vacant lots, and the chilling stares from the street people. She avoids their eyes by referring to the address slip in her hands, finally arriving at a boarded-up storefront. She checks the slip again, and finally she knocks tentatively.

SHERWOOD

Hello? Anyone home?

(no response)

This is Miss Sherwood from the High School. I'm here to see Mr. and Mrs. _____ about LeRoy.

There is no response. She knocks again.

SHERWOOD

(continuing)

Hello?

As she knocks even harder, she discovers that the door is not locked. She hesitates, and then slowly pushes it open.

INT. LEROY'S PAD - DAY

As Sherwood tentatively comes into the deserted store she discovers crumbling walls, a few pieces of castoff furniture, and, over in the corner, on a lumpy daybed, sits a defiant LeRoy.

SHERWOOD
LeRoy?

He glares at her.

SHERWOOD
(continuing)
This is where you live?

LEROY
(finally)
Yeah.

Sherwood takes in the depressing surroundings.

SHERWOOD
I don't understand. Where
are your parents?

LEROY
You just had to keep pushin',
didn't you?
(then)
Okay. Now you know.
(defiant)
I got no parents.

Sherwood is badly shaken, as we:

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. LEROY'S PAD - DAY

A very unsettled Sherwood is making a tour of LeRoy's grimy room. She walks across the creaking floor and looks at the hot plate on the rickety milk crate. She eyes the small stock of canned goods and cereal. Then her eyes find a poster on the wall -- an incongruous art photo of the Joffrey Ballet. Finally:

SHERWOOD

I had no idea.

(then)

How do you manage?

LEROY

You mean...money?

SHERWOOD

Yes.

LEROY

Work summers...nights when I have to...scrounge. I manage.

(then)

And I'll manage till I graduate if you don't spoil it.

SHERWOOD

Me? What do you mean?

LEROY

After all this pushing into my life, you'll do just what I was afraid of.

SHERWOOD

What were you afraid of?

LEROY

You'll turn me over to Welfare or something.

SHERWOOD

Maybe that's a good idea.

LEROY

Forget it. I don't need their hassles. Last time they put me with a family that laughed at my dancing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHERWOOD

Maybe another family wouldn't laugh.

LEROY

I don't have time to waste finding out. You send me to Welfare and I'll disappear.

SHERWOOD

There must be another way.

LEROY

Not for me. It's my life. Let me live it the way I got it workin'.

SHERWOOD

LeRoy, this is not what I expected. I have to think about this.

LEROY

Sure. You think about it.

EXT: SLUM STREET - DAY

Sherwood comes out of LeRoy's pad and heads down the sidewalk, deep in her confusion. When she passes the storefront where Murphy and Davis hang out, she is startled out of her thoughts by:

MURPHY

Lost?

Murphy suddenly looms out of the entryway with a challenging leer. As Sherwood reacts in fright and steps away from Murphy, she bumps into Davis who has come from the other side.

DAVIS

You say the pretty lady's lost?

MURPHY

Looks lost.

DAVIS

Finders keepers!

He laughs loudly as he puts an arm around her.

SHERWOOD

Stop that! Go away!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

But instead, Murphy now grabs her from the other side.

MURPHY

Pretty lady looks upset. Better get her inside.

DAVIS

Good thinking, Murph. Open the door.

MURPHY

I was thinking you'd open it.

They are holding Sherwood tighter and she is struggling more frantically as they pull her toward the shadows.

LEROY (v.o.)

Let her go.

LeRoy comes running into the scene and gives Davis a shove.

DAVIS

Easy, LeRoy.

MURPHY

Yeah, LeRoy. You can get yourself in trouble out here. Better go beddy-by.

LEROY

Don't mess with me, man. Not today.

He suddenly springs high in the air, kicks out, and breaks one of the ancient boards in the nearby fence. He lands lightly, and kicks again, only inches away from Murphy's face.

MURPHY

Got the message.

He drops his hold on Sherwood, nods to Davis and they move quickly off.

LEROY

(to Sherwood)

Knew you shouldn't come.

SHERWOOD

I want to thank you, LeRoy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LEROY

Yeah. I'm sure you'll think of some way.

He regards her challengingly for a moment, as we:

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SCHOOL CAFETERIA - DAY

Bruno is eating lunch with Montgomery.

MONTGOMERY

What do you mean you haven't decided? Roger has already booked rehearsal time in the studio.

BRUNO

It's just not an easy decision.

MONTGOMERY

Oh, isn't it? You trade money, fame, and future freedom for this place. And that's hard?

BRUNO

That's not what I mean.

MONTGOMERY

Don't tell me you have some hangup about quitting school?

BRUNO

No. What it is...is the music.
(distastefully)
Punk.

MONTGOMERY

The fastest-growing segment of all record sales.

BRUNO

But I hate it.

MONTGOMERY

No, you think you should hate it. But that's just your conscious, culturally-conditioned mind. Deep down, where you really live, you must love punk to be able to do it so well.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BRUNO

You don't understand. I get his vision. I'm forcing myself to sit at the piano, surrounded by Roger and all his freaks, and I'm trying to play along...and then suddenly...

He doesn't want to say.

MONTGOMERY

Suddenly what?

BRUNO

I vomit.

MONTGOMERY

So? Vomit is a legitimate expression. Your audience will probably identify with vomit.

BRUNO

That's the whole problem.

MONTGOMERY

No. There is no problem. Face it, Bruno. You're just a natural born punker.

BRUNO

I could vomit right now.

MONTGOMERY

(triumphant)

See!

INT. ENGLISH CLASS - DAY

Lydia and Sherwood are eating a bag lunch at Sherwood's desk.

SHERWOOD

Surely the proper authorities could find some family that understands him.

LYDIA

And then the 'proper authorities' would have to find LeRoy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHERWOOD

Yes, you're right. But it's such a terrible environment. You should have seen it, Lydia. It's a miracle he even makes it to school.

LYDIA

I think I love that kid.

SHERWOOD

Here I am demanding conjugated verbs and the boy is, . . . all alone, Lydia. All alone.

LYDIA

Not all alone. He has his dancing.

SHERWOOD

Yes, I suppose.

LYDIA

And he has us.

SHERWOOD

Correction. He did have you.
Now he has us.

INT. ENGLISH CLASS - DAY

Miss Sherwood sits at her desk as the class fills up with students. LeRoy enters and approaches her warily. She looks up and smiles.

SHERWOOD

Good morning, LeRoy.

LEROY

Anything you want to tell me?

SHERWOOD

I just did. Good morning.

She smiles again. LeRoy thinks about it, relaxes a bit, and takes his seat.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Garcy comes in, trying to keep pace with a brooding Bruno.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GARCY

Mention it to 'em, Bruno.
A Punk Rock Joke Book. Be a
great merchandising thing and
to help promote it, I could
do warm-ups at your concerts.

BRUNO

You've been sitting too close
to Montgomery.

The start-of-class bell rings and the students take
their seats as Sherwood closes the door and comes
to the front of her desk.

ANGLE ON SHERWOOD

She surveys the class with her usual crustiness.

SHERWOOD

Any comments about yesterday's
reading assignment?

There are assorted groans from the class.

SHERWOOD

(continuing)

Glad you enjoyed it. Any other
comments.

Garcy eagerly raises his hand.

SHERWOOD

(continuing)

Yes, Garcy?

GARCY

I really felt the heaven scene
was very profound.

JULIE

What heaven scene?

GARCY

When the alligator died and
went to heaven and St. Peter
asked what it wanted and it said
a polo shirt with a teeny Californian
on the pocket.

Garcy beams proudly as there are more groans.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHERWOOD

Garcy, I could ask for the specific page of Thoreau where you found that passage, but I think it might be more beneficial to all of us if I simply asked for written comments to a few questions I have prepared.

DORIS

You mean a quiz?

SHERWOOD

Yes, Doris. Would everybody please take out pencil and paper?

As the class unhappily opens notebooks, Sherwood looks at LeRoy. He is sitting with arms folded.

SHERWOOD

(continuing gently)

Do you have paper and pencil, Leroy?

ON COCO

She turns to Julie and whispers.

COCO

Here goes LeRoy.

ON SHERWOOD

She waits expectantly as LeRoy regards her.

LEROY

No.

SHERWOOD

(cheerfully)

I'll give you some of mine.

She heads for her desk as Coco and the other students look puzzled.

ON LEROY

Beginning to understand that his relationship with Sherwood has completely changed. And enjoying it.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

Montgomery is sitting at a table with Coco, Garcy, Julie, and Doris. Bruno arrives, carrying his tray.

MONTGOMERY

Well? Did you make the call?

BRUNO

I want to eat on it.

MONTGOMERY

That's ridiculous. It's just as easy to say 'yes' on an empty stomach as on a full one.

BRUNO

How about saying 'no'?

COCO

No? Why would you say no?

GARCY

What's wrong with you, Bruno?

DORIS

I don't understand. Are you saying you might not take this road to stardom?

BRUNO

I don't know what I'm saying. I can't decide.

MONTGOMERY

You have to decide. Roger's waiting for your call. Look, just take a few bites for strength and go to the phone.

BRUNO

I think I lost my appetite.

COCO

Then let Montgomery call. Let me call.

JULIE

Bruno, I just never figured you as a coy person.

BRUNO

Coy? Who's coy? I'm confused.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

COCO

Then listen to us. Take the gig with Psychic Powers.

GARCY

Yeah, Bruno. You gotta take it. You owe it to Montgomery.

MONTGOMERY

I wasn't going to say that.

GARCY

But it's true. Look at everything you've done for Bruno. You've put your friendship with Roger and your personal reputation on the line.

MONTGOMERY

Not to mention my mother's relationship with her hair stylist.

COCO

Right. And what about me? If you get into the punk scene, you could open up doors to my success.

GARCY

All I need is a chance to do warm-ups.

JULIE

I've written everyone in Grand Rapids to be watching for your first album.

DORIS

You'd make the whole school so proud.

COCO

And you'd get your father off the hook of how to pay for your college.

MONTGOMERY

They're right, Bruno. And you know it. You've got to take the job. For your family...and for your friends.

Bruno looks at them miserably and begins to eat for solace.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SCHOOL - ESTABLISHING - DAY (STOCK)

Kids arriving for a new school day.

INT. ENGLISH CLASS - DAY

Miss Sherwood stands in front of her class as it settles down to the sound of the bell.

SHERWOOD'S P.O.V.

As she scans the rows to arrive at LeRoy's vacant seat.

BACK TO SHERWOOD

Looking concerned.

SHERWOOD

Does anyone know if LeRoy is ill today?

COCO

No, Miss Sherwood. He looked fine to me.

GARCY

Me, too. I just passed him working out in the dance room.

COCO

Guess he decided not to come to English today.

SHERWOOD

I see.

She sees, but she is not happy about it.

INT. SCHOOL CORRIDOR - DAY

LeRoy is doing some spectacular leaps and splits for an admiring group of girls. Sherwood arrives and watches until LeRoy catches her eye and stops. The girls see the cold look in Sherwood's eye and immediately disperse. LeRoy, however, does one more maneuver and then casually stands and lets Sherwood take the necessary steps to reach him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHERWOOD
Good afternoon, LeRoy.

LeRoy nods.

SHERWOOD
(continuing)
I missed you in class today.

LEROY
Wasn't there.

SHERWOOD
Some kind of problem I might
help you with?

LEROY
No problem.

SHERWOOD
Good. Then I can expect you
in class tomorrow.

LEROY
I'll be working out.

SHERWOOD
LeRoy, you have plenty of time
to work out in dance class.

LEROY
Dance room's crowded during class.
During English I have it all to
myself.

SHERWOOD
During English you belong in
English.

LEROY
Thought you weren't going to
hassle me anymore.

SHERWOOD
I'm not hassling you. I want
to help you any way I can, but
you have to help me.

LEROY
I already helped you.

SHERWOOD
What are you talking about?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LEROY

The other day...I could have stayed in my place...left you alone on the street. I figure after that we understand each other. You know I don't have time for anything but dancin'.

He walks away, leaving Sherwood seething, as we:

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT. MUSIC ROOM - DAY

Bruno is alone at the piano, playing a complex self-composition in the key of indecision. He pours his struggle into an attack on the conflicting themes that interlace the experimental concerto. Suddenly, he stops, considers, then tentatively plays the simple melody of "Sho...Sho...Sho...Shorossky". He tries it again, listening carefully, as though its elemental rhythm could tell him some answer he could live with. He repeats the theme, sardonically first, then totally serious. Now, he sits in silence, pondering, weighing the balance of these two musical worlds and his future.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Behind him, Mr. Shorossky enters. He comes to sit beside Bruno at the piano. Sarcastically, with one finger, he plunks out the theme of 'his' song.

SHOROSSKY

This is not your world, my son. This is your world.

Shorossky now plays a few magnificent measures of Beethoven. When he stops:

SHOROSSKY

(continuing)

I am angry.

BRUNO

Mr. Shorossky, I apologize for the song. But...

SHOROSSKY

(waving him silent)

The song? Who cares about the song? I care about you.

He gets up and paces, then:

SHOROSSKY

(continuing)

I should not tell you this. But in all the years I have taught, you are the one student with the

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHOROSSKY

(continuing)

most potential for bringing the great masters to life. True, you are arrogant, and defiant, and more irreverent than even your tender years justify. But you have a rare mind and rare hands. It would be criminal for you to sell out to the fickle tastelessness of the marketplace.

BRUNO

What if I didn't sell out?
What if I used the money to buy ...a real chance at what I want to do?

SHOROSSKY

How do you know what you want? You have only begun to build your foundation. Stay in school, son. We will fight. We will hate each other. But in the end, we will both be grateful for what we shall achieve.

He stands there in his exposed vulnerability and Bruno knows how hard it is for Shorossky to plead. But Bruno cannot bring himself to decide in Shorossky's favor. He simply sits in his troubled silence. Finally, Shorossky shrugs helplessly and leaves.

INT. ENGLISH CLASS - DAY

An uneasy Sherwood watches as her students take their places and now she confirms just exactly what she feared.

ON LEROY'S CHAIR

Empty.

BACK TO SHERWOOD

She is staring at it, wondering what to do with the trapped and helpless feeling that leaves her paralyzed.

GARCY (v.o.)

As long as we're just sitting here, do you want to hear about the two penguins on the subway?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHERWOOD

Never. Settle down, everyone,
and turn to page 126.

She glances once again at LeRoy's empty chair, and then forces her eyes back to the textbook.

INT. DANCE CLASSROOM - DAY

LeRoy luxuriates in the empty classroom and begins working out with some classical ballet. After a few moments, Lydia Grant enters.

LYDIA

What are you doing here?

LEROY

It's called a Tour Jate.

LYDIA

I know what's it called. Why are you doing it third period?

LEROY

Sherwood excused me from English.

LYDIA

Why?

LEROY

Because my Tour Jate needs work.

LYDIA

Oh?

She watches skeptically as LeRoy continues his workout.

INT. TEACHER'S LOUNGE - DAY

Sherwood lies on the chaise with a damp washrag over her eyes as Lydia stirs herself a mug of instant coffee.

SHERWOOD

I do owe him my life.

LYDIA

Then pay him back. Save his.

SHERWOOD

I'm trying, Lydia. But I have so much to make up for. Maybe if I'd realized earlier how much LeRoy has had to sacrifice...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LYDIA

Sacrifice is one thing. Shuck is another. The kid is walking all over you.

Sherwood removes the washrag and sits up.

SHERWOOD

All right, maybe he is. But maybe he's entitled to it. You didn't see where he lives.

LYDIA

No, but I see what he's doing with it. He's getting you to help him ruin his life.

SHERWOOD

Dancing is his life. The boy survives who-knows-how and by-some-miracle in order to dance. I'm not stopping that.

LYDIA

No, but you're putting a time-bomb in his hands. What if he breaks an ankle, twists a knee? I know a dozen kids who were more promising than LeRoy who lost their futures to bad falls. Even if he doesn't, it's a lousy way to live. There are a thousand people who want every job.

SHERWOOD

I know all that. What do you think keeps me going? I'm here to give all these kids something solid to live on after their dreams collapse. But LeRoy is different.

LYDIA

What's different about him? So he has it tough. Who doesn't? Do you want to hear the 'excuses' I used to use to con my teachers?

SHERWOOD

You?

LYDIA

Sure. If you really want to help LeRoy, show him some respect. Treat him like any other kid who walks in your door.

INT. REHEARSAL HALL - DAY

Bruno and Montgomery are meeting with Roger and his fellow Psychic Powers.

ROGER

Questions? What kind of questions?

MONTGOMERY

Nothing to worry about Roger.

ROGER

I thought you said everything was cool.

MONTGOMERY

It's cool. Believe me.

ROGER

Then what's with questions?

MONTGOMERY

Bruno's getting a lot of pressure to stay in school. A lot of pressure.

ROGER

Is that all? No problem.

BRUNO

No problem?

ROGER

Stay in school and we'll rehearse nights. Okay...?

BRUNO

Yeah...

MONTGOMERY

Fantastic, Roger. I knew you'd understand.

ROGER

I understand. I can identify. Of course, we'll have to figure out something else when we're on the road.

BRUNO

What road?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROGER

The guy who's interested in us at the record company figures we should work out a really great live show before we go into the studio. I think he's testing us a little, but there's nothing to worry about. We'll go out, do the weekend gigs, and knock 'em dead.

(to Bruno)

You got a car?

BRUNO

No.

ROGER

Too bad. I was hoping you had wheels of some kind. Well...we'll figure out something. We can always ride the bus. Most of our gigs will be across the river in Jersey.

BRUNO

Jersey?

ROGER

Right. And listen...any time it's a paid gig, we'll split right down the middle...equal shares. I'm sure we'll have some twenty-five, thirty-dollar weekends.

MONTGOMERY

Plus rehearsal pay.

ROGER

What rehearsal pay?

BRUNO

No rehearsal pay?

ROGER

It'll come. I figure six months doing live gigs, the record company will see how great we are and they'll pick up the option and put us into paid rehearsal. I learned a lot from my last three groups.

MONTGOMERY

Your mother didn't mention you've had three groups.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROGER

Yeah, and the last one came that
close to getting the record company's
final nod.

Bruno and Montgomery exchange uneasy glances. Montgomery
looks guilty.

ROGER

(continuing, blithely)
Any other questions?

BRUNO

No thanks, Roger. I think
you've really cleared the air.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY - ESTABLISHING (STOCK)

Kids entering for the day.

INT. SCHOOL CORRIDOR - DAY

Bruno and Montgomery make their way through the traffic.

MONTGOMERY

I want you to know I was awake
all night...feeling sorry.

BRUNO

Forget it. I talked myself into
getting carried away.

MONTGOMERY

But I want you to know I'm
going to make it up to you.

BRUNO

Forget it.

MONTGOMERY

No, Bruno. It's only right.
I've already got your Shorovsky
song submitted to four top
producers.

Bruno reacts.

BRUNO

You're pulling my leg.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MONTGOMERY

Why would I do that? The punk world needs you, Bruno.

Bruno stares at him and then starts to grab. Montgomery evades the clutch, starts to run, and Bruno goes chasing him.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Sherwood is standing in the open doorway of her classroom. She searches the passing faces until she spots LeRoy, and then she moves to him.

SHERWOOD

Good morning, LeRoy.

LEROY

Yeah?

SHERWOOD

I have something for you on my desk. Would you follow me, please.

She heads back for her door. LeRoy shrugs and follows.

INT. ENGLISH CLASS - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Sherwood arrives at her desk, picks up a sheet of paper, and turns to face the approaching LeRoy.

SHERWOOD

Here.

LeRoy takes the paper without looking at it.

LEROY

What's this?

SHERWOOD

It's a list of your makeup work. I will need it by next Monday.

LEROY

What makeup work?

SHERWOOD

Everything you've missed all week. And you better not miss any more classes. I want you in your seat for the entire period every day.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LEROY

What is this? I thought we had an understanding.

SHERWOOD

We do. You want to learn dancing at this school. To stay in this school, you need to fully complete all English class requirements.

LEROY

You didn't learn anything, did you?

SHERWOOD

No, LeRoy. I learned plenty. Now it's your turn.

They stand in confrontation. LeRoy is getting angry and Sherwood is looking like a rock. Finally, LeRoy explodes.

LEROY

Forget it!

He crumples the assignment list and throws it on the floor.

SHERWOOD

Pick it up, LeRoy. I would hate to have to terminate your enrollment.

LEROY

Enrollment? Who needs enrollment?

He turns and stamps out, as Sherwood begins to wonder if she overplayed her hand.

EXT. SLUM STREET - DAY

LeRoy walks along the gritty sidewalk, propelled by his fury. He kicks at a trash can. Glares at a staggering bag-lady. Suddenly, he stops.

LEROY'S P.O.V.

Murphy and Davis are completing a stealthy paper-bag exchange with a wasted girl in the alleyway.

ANOTHER ANGLE

LeRoy and the two street hustlers exchange glares of testing-out. Finally, Murphy smiles with serpent charm.

MURPHY

Look who's here.

DAVIS

You're home early, LeRoy. Not messin' with school?

LEROY

No.

MURPHY

You available?

LEROY

For what?

MURPHY

Little errand. Scare some people, like you scared us.

LEROY

Let you know.

He takes off.

INT. LEROY'S PAD - DAY

LeRoy enters and goes to his daybed. He sits, thinking. He studies the bare room, eyeing the broken floorboards, his sparse pantry, the grimy window. Finally, he gets up and walks to the wall.

ON LEROY

He stands before his ballet poster. Slowly, he reaches up and touches it.

CUT TO:

INT. MUSIC ROOM - DAY

Chaos. Class has not yet started, but every piano bench is occupied and every keyboard is being pounded with a different melody. After a moment, Shorossky enters and as he comes further into the room, each piano player he passes notices his arrival and falls silent.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Finally, every pianist is quiet except Bruno, who plays his exercises with eyes closed. Finally, Bruno becomes aware of his solo performance, opens his eyes, and looks at Shorossky.

SHOROSSKY

Welcome to the earth planet.

BRUNO

Thank you.

SHOROSSKY

I am glad to see that you are still with us, Bruno.

BRUNO

Still here.

SHOROSSKY

And I am glad that I was able to help you, son. Now, I trust that together we can delve more completely into the world where you really belong...Beethoven...Mozart...

BRUNO

I'd rather not.

SHOROSSKY

I beg your pardon?

BRUNO

They turn me on about as much as "Hippy Hippy Shake". What I'd really like is a chance to do my music.

SHOROSSKY

Your music?

BRUNO

We have the technology now for sounds no one has ever heard. And I'm sure the computer could devise mathematical rhythms that no one has yet discovered. If we could free our minds of classicism's constrictions and avoid the traps of contemporary vacuity, we could enter a musical era beyond belief.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHOROSSKY

First things first.

BRUNO

Listen, sir. I've been playing around conceptually with a very intriguing theme...

He begins to play his 'concept' on the piano. As he gets deeper into it, Shorossky looks more upset, but the other kids in the class gather around and look ecstatic.

ANGLE ON DOOR

Suddenly, the door opens and kids from the dance class pour in, led by Coco.

COCO

Hey, what is that? Sounds compulsive.

As the room quickly becomes filled with curious outsiders and others in the class begin to pick up Bruno's melody, Shorossky throws up his hands and slumps into a chair in total resignation.

PRODUCTION NUMBER #2

Led by Coco, the dancers improvise a routine. Others in the music class put together an impromptu rhythm section. Bruno stands to conduct the other piano players. It's pure joy.

BACK TO DOOR

Leroy suddenly appears. He moves up to Doris who is on the edge of all the excitement.

LEROY

What's this?

DORIS

I can't figure out whether it's Mr. Shorossky's class or study hall. Want to join?

LEROY

Can't.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LeRoy exits as the music number continues.

INT. ENGLISH CLASSROOM - DAY

Sherwood is working at her desk in an empty classroom.
LeRoy enters and comes to stand in front of her.
She looks up.

 LEROY
 I'm listenin'.

Sherwood nods, businesslike. And turns away to
hide her smile.

INT. MUSIC ROOM - DAY

Coco, Bruno, Garcy, Julie, Montgomery, and even Doris
leading the musical rout, as Shorossky covers his
ears and we:

 FADE OUT.

THE END