

Silence of Beethoven

A full-length play

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

both Ludwig Von Beethoven, 35. Composer, musician and genius. He is whimsy and deeply serious living in a constant state of creating music.

Antonia Brentano, 28. Elegant and sophisticated, she is one of Ludwig's great love. Her cool approach to situations balances Beethoven's mania.

Steven Von Breuning , 29. Beethoven's best friend and 1st violinist. A valued musician and friend, Steven brings rational humor to all situations.

Jimmy, 38. Movie producer, entrepreneur, attractive, and always an opportunist.

She Valery, 19. Extraordinarily beautiful and confident for her age. is about to become a Movie Star.

SETTINGS

Lenox Massachusetts.

May 2020.

Living room in Ludwig's house. The house is all glass and the outside becomes part of it.

PRODUCTION NOTES

Throughout the play, parts of "Eroica" are piped in, representing Beethoven's musical thinking. The 4 acts represent "Eroica's" 4 movements, both in tempo and theme. At times other pieces are piped in as described by the directions.

The dress worn by Valery for the 1800's should be costumed to represent the Germanic upper class of that time.

SCENE 1

*Present day. Late Spring. Lenox
Massachusetts.*

Ludwig Von Beethoven's house.

*Clean lines and spareness create
the style of the modern living
room.*

*DSR is a couch, soft and deep
with cream leather chairs and
small tables.*

*The living room reflects the
colors of the outside with
blues, greens and whites. All
it's walls are windows. The
light from the morning sun fills
the room with glorious sunlight.
The house is surrounded in
nature, in hints of apple
orchards, woods, a red barn, and
a blue sky. UCS there are glass
French doors that lead out to a
meadow. USR is a fireplace, a
wood bin and andirons. SL is a
baby grand. Beyond the piano is
a hint of a kitchen. There are
piles of unwashed glasses,
plates, along with various
instruments and miles of music
sheets, strewn about as if they
had been hurriedly written.*

*Ludwig suffers from an
underlying condition of many
intestinal ailments, tinnitus
and hearing loss, the cause of
Ludwigs sharp moods.*

At this moment, Ludwig is a rock star, and though he frequently fights his health he is in the best state of being since he is only 35.

The French doors burst open as Ludwig Von Beethoven, 35, dressed like a music icon, dark layers and gloves, carries a bundle of wood as he stomps into the room. He crosses over to the wood bin and adds to the pile.

Imitating the opening notes of the "5th Symphony", "Da da da dah!", his words are synchronized with the allegro con brio of the 1st movement.

BEETHOVEN

Pin oak and pine. (Pauses. Listens to the words.) Black willow, beech. Wow. What is that? That is good.

He throws his outer wear off and tosses them willy-nilly.

The music the Allegro con brio of the 5th Symphony is piped in (the music heard in Beethoven's mind) as he continues reciting the words to his music.

BEETHOVEN

Pine cherry. Tulip. Shad blow. Box elder. Hackberry. Tulip. Hemlock. Oh Hemlock. Hemlock. Hemlock. (Music Stops.) Dear Mother wind chimes, you were mad at me today. Woke me up early. (Makes wind chime sounds.) You battered me with pinecones. I know you did it on purpose! I need a bit of luck this time. Red oak and pine. (Back to his musical words.) Black willow, beech, red oak, and pine.

Toni rings the bell. She rings again.

Ludwig does not hear it. He is writing music on one of the music sheets he finds.

Toni walks in. In her early 30's She is elegant in dress, speech and cool with her emotions.

TONI

Ludwig.

Beethoven is surprised to see her suddenly in the middle of the living room.

BEETHOVEN

Did you sleep here?

TONI

I was ringing the bell.

BEETHOVEN

The bell? I can't listen to it. It's out of tune. Why didn't you knock?

TONI

Because I thought you'd hear the bell.

BEETHOVEN

No. I can't listen to something that is out of tune. I almost broke my neck.

TONI

Then I'll get you a butler.

BEETHOVEN

No, no interruptions. The sound of a human in the morning, crushes my appetite. It's the squirrels! Brown. red. firing! Pine cones shooting from the tops of trees.

TONI

Flying squirrels?

BEETHOVEN

I didn't sleep well last night...It was the tuna salad you served. I had to take an early walk.

TONI

You should have stayed over! I asked you to stay over...

BEETHOVEN

With the peach punch soiree of popping over. Let them see me after the concert and they won't think of me a a piano player any more. You cooked last night? (Mockingly imitating Toni.) "Oh these are my moneyed friends. It'll do you good to get close to them. You'll just adore their company..."

TONI

You've never been this rude.

BEETHOVEN

I'm rude? Chatter?! In the room that I'm playing...?

TONI

They didn't know. They didn't know it was live.

BEETHOVEN

How is that possible?

TONI

Everything sounds live.

BEETHOVEN

Except live! And that irritating flirt. What was I supposed to do with her? Tolerate her noxious sneezes And her tissue nose. Always sniffing into a tissue as she spoke adoration. That's a mixed metaphor. Go on and sneeze. I'll hold off my adagio, while you settle.

TONI

She's the Boston Symphony. She specifically asked to meet with you. Not five minutes after you finished playing... I turn around and you're gone!

BEETHOVEN

I had a tune.

TONI

You always have a tune.

BEETHOVEN

She pretended it was allergies!

TONI

It's not a reason to be rude. They arranged a free space for you in the middle of their own program...

BEETHOVEN

Does she practice everyday? Is she a musician? Cause then she would understand. I have to prepare for the concert!

TONI

Their concert.

BEETHOVEN

No, my concert...

TONI

They're allowing the space for you! At no cost to us. They're paying the orchestra! To show you to the public! Ludwig Von Beethoven is performing at Tanglewood! Let's all get to know this guy. Do you not understand how this works? Last night they wanted to meet you up close and personal.

BEETHOVEN

Well here I stand. Warts and all.

TONI

If only you weren't so proud of your warts.

Silence. Beethoven walks over to his piano and plays Eroica's first movement. "Da. Da."

He stops.

BEETHOVEN

Where's my music sheets? I have to practice. The published sheets. Not my written notes.

TONI

I don't know?

They both look through his sheets of music and he find's it through many piles.

As he reads the music of the first movement of Eroica, it is piped in to reveal the first theme in the allegro. Music stops.

BEETHOVEN

I cannot imagine what you think about all day. Just pleasing people. Oh I must call so and so and tell them nice things about themselves...

TONI

Ludwig, they're your admirers. Patrons. Excited to be here. An auspicious moment. It's the chatter.

BEETHOVEN

Normal people. Why do I have normal people with me?

TONI

Average lives. You offer them grace. But you only have your first two records out, so this behavior is rude.. After the third symphony, Eroica, (what we have all been waiting for) then you can be Ludwig whatever you're grooving.

BEETHOVEN

Your ability to be un-moved is by the blessing of your perfect upbringing. A charming, sweet childhood. Nothing deeply disturbs you. You always think the best of people. Better than they are.

TONI

If you didn't have people you wouldn't have an orchestra.

BEETHOVEN

I wouldn't need an orchestra if I didn't have people.

TONI

That's right. no one to listen to you. You can stop writing music now.

BEETHOVEN

I don't want to stop.

TONI

Oh. So what are you going to do. Smile a little? Cause honey... you need me to make things happen. Everyone chatters when they walk into a room.

BEETHOVEN

You told me I had to come over and that this gathering was for purely for my benefit... I don't remember how you introduced me but all of a sudden I'm plopped in front of a piano...

TONI

I introduced you as an up and coming composer. Not everyone knows you! About to perform a new symphony...

BEETHOVEN

They told me what to play Moonlight sonata!

TONI

It was the only piece they knew from you.

BEETHOVEN

Moonlight sonata. How could that be?

TONI

It's a great piece. I see nothing wrong with that being your theme.

BEETHOVEN

Why would I play what they know? I'm a composer.

TONI

At least it's yours! They could have said play the Alla Turca.

BEETHOVEN

No one should confuse me with Mozart.

TONI

(She tries to calm him.)

They haven't heard Eroica. You'll see my darling. Your sound is from heaven. It makes me cry just thinking about it.

BEETHOVEN

I wanted to play the Scherzo. Just a piece of Eroica. I touch souls? And yours?

TONI

Deeply. I woke up in the middle of the night with your face exploding in front of me. Applause. Before all of us, baton in your hand. Eroica!

Beethoven does not hear Toni.
Eroica's scherzo pipes in. Ludwig
companies on his piano. Plays
while he's talking.

BEETHOVEN

They would have liked this better than Moonlight Sonata.
It's a wonderful ice breaker. Listen to the strings.
Flutes, violas, french horns, oboes, cellos...

TONI

Its a consequence of business. I'll keep my eye on it for you, darling. You shouldn't get involved. We already have a full day. Ungrateful protege.

BEETHOVEN

I'm not their protege. I'm not anyone's protege.

TONI

It's impossible to understand who you are. You're different all the time. I've seen you enjoy yourself at parties.

BEETHOVEN

The money people should stay separate from the artists. They're not friends of the arts. All they want to know is when will it be done. Actually, they play the enemy... Art is not done. It's continuous. And then the fragrance of you a new flower or a pepper or a story from the barber. Done? Is it done?

Beethoven walks away. His ears are filled with static tinnitus. His struggles are eccentric as he exercises his ears.

TONI

They're not your enemies! They exist, so you can be Beethoven.

Beethoven turns to look at her and makes a strange face because he did not hear all her words. In this interlude, Ludwig is suffering from his ears

TONI

What is wrong with you?

BEETHOVEN

Wrong? Why would there be anything wrong?

TONI

Oh my gosh. You've turned me off again. If you're not listening, let me know. Let me know when the genius is at work. I'll stop talking. We're talking in circles. We agree. You love money! You spend it like a child. You want it. You want money all the time. You're always adding musicians! You never hesitate to order the best steaks and wines.

BEETHOVEN

I love money! I love you more! You must stop!

TONI

I'm sorry.

BEETHOVEN

The tinnitus is loud.

TONI

I've stressed you out...

BEETHOVEN

Never, never. I want to push through this... There's a list? Where's my list? I want to...yesterday's rehearsal had so many issues.

TONI

Did you eat?

BEETHOVEN

Not quite the intensity that I need from the winds. And the sound because we've been rehearsing indoors and this is outdoors. . Well today...today. Another rehearsal. We'll see what it sounds like. I'll discuss my notes first. Where are they? Maybe upstairs in my room.

TONI

I'll get them for you.

BEETHOVEN

I set them aside from the other papers. They should be near my bed. (A sudden pain from his gut shudders Ludwig) Ahhh. Can you make me a cup of tea please?

Toni gets up to take care of
business and tea makings.
Beethoven, about to sit down,
picks up the paper from the chair
and reads it.

TONI

I'm sorry. I'm sorry. You do look pale. You didn't sleep well? I'm always trying to help you. You know that?

BEETHOVEN

Thank you. (Pain.) Awww. I might have twisted something. I reach for things behind me. The walk every morning... It clears the night. This morning, I went through the French doors, down to the meadow. For a change. Ah, it was amazing. The sun hadn't risen, so the forest was still dark. And the air was almost unbreathable. Cold. Sharp. Full of pine. It excites me. I'm glad you rented this. We're not in town but? That was silly of me to think I could just stay at a hotel. Juniper. Very strong and like a perfume, enticing. I took a stick and then another and I played tapping it in the woods but then I thought to collect some and suddenly I'm pelted by pine cones.

TONI

No, you're not.

BEETHOVEN

Mother Earth woke up all the animals and they pelted me with pine cones. Ready, aim, fire!

TONI

It was her own personal mission.

BEETHOVEN

Absolutely. She was furious. I tripped...

TONI

Did you drop it?

BEETHOVEN

No, the wood was mine. I collected an orchestra. Mother Earth wouldn't hurt me. She's my muse.

TONI

Your muse? I thought I was your muse?

BEETHOVEN

Vivo, corporal, spirits, toads and rivers that run!

TONI

Who am I to judge?

BEETHOVEN

You must understand I have all this rational reasoning up and down my sleeves. Even if I'm playing, I'm still firmly planted like a good old oak tree. But! I am the outcome of life's cruelest joke. You smile? You know? Made a good life in spite of myself. Underneath my lovable, delicious, charming, veneer is a man who is not Lord of his Castle. Except now. At this very moment, I am.

TONI

Good dear, and you will be this way forever. We wouldn't want you to have self control. Your mind needs my tranquility. Music must not be shackled. No one shackles you. Except you. I don't think you're in control of this illness you sometimes say you have. Have you seen all the specialists?

BEETHOVEN

It's not just one thing.

TONI

Oh, a mysterious moving illness. Sometimes its your digestion...

BEETHOVEN

I like to keep you guessing.

TONI

Well I'm worried. You want to be really sick? So a lot of different groups want our space.

BEETHOVEN

They can't have it.

TONI

It's really a rehearsal space they turned into a concert venue. There is a possibility.

BEETHOVEN

I don't believe you.

TONI

You're not the only orchestra in town.

BEETHOVEN

Oh please don't threaten me, Antonia. If the concert were canceled you would not be here. You'd be calling your husband and then everyone would behave.

TONI

Well it's not fixed.

BEETHOVEN

It's not fixed? Oh? Excuse me. I forgot to finish my symphony! Why aren't you fixing it? It's your job.. Performance at 2pm. This Saturday. Let me do my work. And you have to fix something is that what you're telling me? Tell your people! They shouldn't deprive themselves of a wonderful concert!

Toni almost falls into his
outburst but needs to repress her
intense emotions. She paces.

TONI

All the adds are running. Old fashioned posters. At the Red Lion. A big picture of you. With your hair combed down and a silly wave on top. Who did that?

BEETHOVEN

The photographer.

TONI

Why did she comb your hair that way?

BEETHOVEN

She grew up playing piano. She loves me. And we started to talk about music. I want to wear my hair like that for the concert.

TONI

Ludwig von Beethoven loves cranberry walnut muffins!...Where did she get that idea?

BEETHOVEN

We did hundreds of different pictures.

TONI

Not one smile.

BEETHOVEN

I like to walk in the woods.

TONI

A composer who lives in the woods. That would have been better.

BEETHOVEN

So I ate muffins.

TONI

Like a child.

BEETHOVEN

I wanted it over! I'm not human.

TONI

Partially. You have ideas like a human. But you behave like? It's how you need to run back, for your silence. If anyone asks why you left so abruptly. That's what I will say.

BEETHOVEN

You know me so well.

TONI

Your silence, to compose. Your eccentricities. They know you're a genius, after all. I've sold them on that.

BEETHOVEN

They won't cancel...

TONI

I know. I fixed it.

Toni exits to prepare his tea.

Music is piped in: the 1st movement of Eroica as it nears the crescendos. The music sharply stops. He writes some notes, scribbling quickly.

BEETHOVEN

(To himself.)

The crescendo builds from the note before! (He conducts.) Quiet my violins. The string as thin as a centipede's leg. Silent bowing. Pull through. Stretching, from a cold night. distant. Pianissimo. The mind hears the whisper. Then! Yes! Sudden, crescendo. (He stops, and the music stops.) Much more dramatic. What is the sound that the mind reproduces?

Toni returns with tea and gives him the cup.

TONI

An internal sound?

BEETHOVEN

The pulse of your heartbeat.

TONI

A drum?

BEETHOVEN

You hear yours? The sound...

TONI

Blood...

Music plays as he describes it.

BEETHOVEN

When the crescendo builds. The skin raises its temperature... Breathing more rapidly. Sweat. Pores. A burst of wetness. "Da Dah!" Yes. That's it. The percussion of your heart beat. Sound waves on your skin. Oh?! I wonder if I could make people salivate? Do you salivate?

TONI

I don't know?

BEETHOVEN

I know you cry. Dribbling...

TONI

I don't dribble...

BEETHOVEN

You cry.

TONI

Yes I cry.

BEETHOVEN

Ahhh, I want you to salivate.

He laughs as he wipes his chin and forehead with a handkerchief.

The music continues of the 1st movement as he conducts around the room. Tenderly she follows his movements to catch him to hug him. He responds with a little kiss but pulls away.

TONI

Will you behave when you become a star?

BEETHOVEN

Yes.

TONI

You'll get so much attention. Everything you do and say. People will judge and watch you and see how you dress and eat..

BEETHOVEN

Come and get me. I like attention.

TONI

I know that.

He grabs her for a moment to confess his sickness. He stares at her but she sees it as a show of love.

BEETHOVEN

It's something very profound, that I have missed in my life.

TONI

Once you're a star you'll be..

BEETHOVEN

The man behind the sounds...I will disappear...

TONI

You?

BEETHOVEN

Just my music will live on.

TONI

Everyone will know that face.

BEETHOVEN

Cash and coats. I like coats. I could have money? Sirloins. Pot Roast...Will they forgive me?

TONI

For what?

BEETHOVEN

I've deceived them.

TONI

Your audience?

BEETHOVEN

They'll never know. I'm too hairy and ugly for them to even probe. Who is this man?.

TONI

Oh Louie.

BEETHOVEN

Ugliness has its advantages. Who's that walking bacteria who wanted to hear Moonlight Sonata?

TONI

The president of the board of the Boston symphony.

BEETHOVEN

She was happy I left.

TONI

She thought you only left the room.

BEETHOVEN

I looked at her. After I played. Her smile was looking around, probably for other men. I would have sat with her. There was no eye contact. If I was handsome she would have felt insulted that I left so early.

TONI

She was disappointed.

BEETHOVEN

You love me in spite of this face.

TONI

In particular. I'm a religious woman.

BEETHOVEN

Antonia. Will you be there?

TONI

Fervently.

He opens the French doors.

BEETHOVEN

Can you smell the apple blossoms? And there's the red barn. Can you see it? We'll pick apples.

TONI

We won't be here for apples.

BEETHOVEN

I want this home. Everything is mine. I want to play for the apple blossoms. It'll make their petals pinker. The red barn is empty. It'll be my studio. It's all mine.

TONI

You have no rules, do you?

BEETHOVEN

No. What rules? Not in anything. Especially in music. Oh yes in the beginning of my romance and seduction of the beautiful Antonia Brentano, I had rules, to be obedient, all the time.

TONI

Oh you never showed me you had rules in the seduction...

BEETHOVEN

Carefully designed. I had hygiene rules. I bathed for you. A whole day. I kept seeing dirt on my fingernails or my head and then I'd jump back into the bathe.

TONI

Clean toes. You were so proud of them.

BEETHOVEN

Your feet are so dainty.

TONI

I never thought about getting to the toes that quickly. It was my father who warned me.

BEETHOVEN

Don't fall in love with a musician.

TONI

If you had a daughter?

BEETHOVEN

Make me one! Test me. Do we love each other, Antonia?
You're always questioning my love. Make me one. Our zodiacs
match. You always tell me that. The first thing you said.
We're a good match.. When you walk in the room, it fills
with perfumes from million orchids, ...

TONI

To understand my place in your life I try to stay detached.
I have my own special place as an overseer. So no harm
comes to you. My wild man. My lover of divine beauty. I am
a woman very much in love with two men. Don't forget my
husband loves you too, and he's progressive in his
attitudes. He wants the best for you, too.

BEETHOVEN

Your beauty makes me shy.

Beethoven walks out to the edge to
look at the vista.

Steven rings bell and enters from
SR without a pause. He stops in
reverence and listens without
interruption.

Beethoven speaks out to the vista.

BEETHOVEN

This, is a profound house. It makes me feel limitless. I
feel... well. At sunrise the tops of the trees flame up
like gold leafed steeples against the navy blue. Antonia, I
live in beauty! Like an eagle, poised to take flight!

5th Symphony first notes pipe in.

BEETHOVEN

Da-da da dah! The mountains! The lake! A thin silver line
through the forest. My wildflower meadow. I will write and
writ! The red barn can be my studio! Surrounded with apple
blossoms.

STEVEN

Maestro!

BEETHOVEN

Oh thank goodness. Finally someone I can talk to.

Beethoven runs to hug his best
friend warmly.

STEVEN

Antonia.

TONI

Good morning, Steven. How is the house you rented?

STEVEN

Very small but in my taste. Comfortable like a jacket. A
Parson's home. The entrance is his office. But the backyard
has a good side porch and a door to the kitchen. You must
come and visit, Ludwig.

BEETHOVEN

I will. We're all going to live together. I can see things
here.

STEVEN

I have a big old chestnut tree and a tire swing. I'll give
you a good push.

BEETHOVEN

Swinging up to the heavens..

STEVEN

To grab some notes for your next symphony. I am completely
wired like a high school kid, Maestro. I've never felt like
this. The anticipation...

BEETHOVEN

What did you practice last night?

STEVEN

Bowing.

BEETHOVEN

Pure bowing?

STEVEN

Bowing, for my arms. Till I was shaking.

BEETHOVEN

Good!

Steven demonstrates his arm muscles.

BEETHOVEN

I carried logs. Feel them! That's a conductor's arm!

He offers Steven his muscles. They tussle with each other comparing muscles.

STEVEN

Well feel me!

TONI

Well feel me!

BEETHOVEN

Where do I feel?

TONI

My arm!

STEVEN

My chest!

BEETHOVEN

A-ha! Now mine. Yes! Big logs! You carried a cup of tea. Did you?

TONI

Where did you put it? I gave it to you.

Toni searches for the cup.

STEVEN

Twigs! Kindling.

BEETHOVEN

I carried logs!

TONI

Is your tux in the closet?

STEVEN

You've always been stronger than me!

BEETHOVEN

Spoiled brat! I carried you up the stairs. When you were drunk.

STEVEN

You've made up for it.

Beethoven is only looking at Steven and does not hear Toni's request.

Toni walks towards the bedroom and pauses waits for a response. Toni exits.

Beethoven wanders to look at his music sheets.

STEVEN

If you had a good violin I could show you. Hit every note! And then? Complete stop. Like a pole vaulter resting in mid air. My supersonic power! Ludwig!

Steven demonstrates his bowing technique. Beethoven with his back turned is completely involved in reading the music sheets.

BEETHOVEN

Opus #47. This is number 1. And then Opus#47 has a number 2.

STEVEN

Why are you giving it to me like this? I wasn't prepared to do paper work. 1 and 2?

BEETHOVEN

What else are you going to do? Just keep talking? This is Opus #47.

STEVEN

Okay. Okay. Let me get the file.

Steven runs over to the box and
pulls out music sheets in files

Beethoven makes piles of music
sheets.

STEVEN

Where's 48?

BEETHOVEN

It's already taken. Steven, you should exercise your core.
Here take this one for publication. The violins don't take
your lead because you have no core.

STEVEN

I'm the first violinist. I own the string core.

BEETHOVEN

I own it!

STEVEN

It was one mistake at an earlier rehearsal. That they had
started after me? Okay. I was waiting for your signal. It
never happened again. we're all in sync...

BEETHOVEN

How could they start after you if they're following your
lead?

Steven is looking over the music
sheets and addresses the issues of
Ludwig's numbers.

STEVEN

I apologize Maestro, but it was your beat that was late?

BEETHOVEN

My beat?

STEVEN

Somehow you were behind the measure.

BEETHOVEN

I was trailing?

STEVEN

Everyone caught up...

BEETHOVEN

Including me, I suppose? Caught up to my music? That's how the performance will be... the concert will be in front of the Maestro like a pack of wild horses...

Ludwig is not paying attention to Steven.

STEVEN

It's in your gestures. The beginning movement is only slowed down when you turn the page. Somehow, I think you were a meter behind. We'll get a page turner for you. (Looks at the music sheet.) Oh, no, no. Can we just say this is opus 52? You cannot have the same Opus number again.

Steven brings the music to Ludwig.

BEETHOVEN

Well how about before opus.

STEVEN

Okay before opus. Without opus numbers. WOO. Without Opus.

BEETHOVEN

Woo-woo.

STEVEN

Even with Woo-woo, you have to follow the numbers in order. You're supposed to enter...

BEETHOVEN

If the musicians don't understand my signals we have to have a rehearsal today. I need to straighten this out.

STEVEN

We don't have the full orchestra back. We're missing musicians...

BEETHOVEN

Even if you're missing a few musicians they could still get an idea. You say there's a problem with my timing?

BEETHOVEN

I'd like to work that out. Even if we had one instrument, I can clear this up right now.

STEVEN

Opus 49. Ha-ha!

BEETHOVEN

Send the publishers about the next WOO.

STEVEN

Yes. Yes. It's on my list for a trillion things to do for you. And packing you up for Tuesday.

BEETHOVEN

We're leaving?

STEVEN

Yes, of course.

BEETHOVEN

I'm not leaving. I'm in the middle of my next symphony...I have music here...

STEVEN

Maestro we have a concert in Boston. Eroica! One at a time. Before the reviews are out! They want you to hear you. Before the rest of the world hears you. It's royalty. A private institution. Ludwig, we have to go on the road....We're performing at an estate!

BEETHOVEN

Antonia says I behaved badly. No one wants to meet me. They're canceling Saturday's concert any way.

STEVEN

That's impossible.

BEETHOVEN

That's what I told her.

STEVEN

She can't stand letting go of you. That's what will happen. Your flight is about to begin. Our flight!

BEETHOVEN

We're all traveling on Tuesday? Same orchestra?

STEVEN

Home turf for most of the musicians. We've invited their families. They're happy to play. They almost volunteered...

BEETHOVEN

Really? Let's hold them to it. So we're traveling. (Pang.)
A hot bath and soup..let them come here. It's not that far?

STEVEN

Well?, I'll go through the publishing papers. You do what you have to take care of yourself. Did you write anything between the sheets?

BEETHOVEN

I always do! Stop worrying about me. I'm a man. Full grown, but short. I have you for tall and handsome. We could have a rehearsal right here. Right on the meadow. I want to live here.

STEVEN

It's that kind of place.

BEETHOVEN

You put pictures of me everywhere?

STEVEN

Yes.

BEETHOVEN

In Lenox?

STEVEN

And every other town.

BEETHOVEN

The air is more filtered.

STEVEN

Are you feeling better?

BEETHOVEN

My stomach?

STEVEN

Better appetite. No? What?

BEETHOVEN

My ears.

STEVEN

Your sinuses. Elevation?

BEETHOVEN

My hearing.

STEVEN

You have a cold? I can hear it in your throat. I'm catching one too.

BEETHOVEN

It could be? I have an ear infection. I get them so often, I don't know I have them.

Toni comes out with his evening clothes that are seriously rumpled and a few other items.

BEETHOVEN

I don't want to wear the tux.

TONI

Is that why you threw it in the corner? What are you wearing?

BEETHOVEN

A sweater?

TONI

A sweater, Maestro. I'll knit it immediately. I'll get some wool at the sheep farm. Good bye, my dears.... I have tickets to deliver to the Teachers of the Tanglewood Music Center, and I'm supposed to have lunch with the Mayor.

Steven exits SR with a load of music sheets to organize.

BEETHOVEN

What happened to "I might not have a concert?"

TONI

I've changed my mind. I forgive you.

BEETHOVEN

Did you book Eroica for a private concert on Tuesday?

TONI

I did.

BEETHOVEN

When did you arrange this?

TONI

My dear friend Princess Lobkowitz read an article about you. She called me to invite us to play at her estate... And since all the musicians lived in the area we put together a concert.

BEETHOVEN

Before or after you threatened me?

TONI

I never threatened you.

BEETHOVEN

You threatened me. And used the party as part of your plot. You knew I would misbehave. Very deceitful, Antonia.

TONI

Oh stop being dramatic. This is not King Lear. I have no plot. I thought I was your inspiration.

BEETHOVEN

You are my darling. Ah, the only one who understands the eccentricities of divine genius...

TONI

You want to be dramatic? I'll give you drama. "Some are born great, some achieve greatness and some have greatness thrust upon them."

BEETHOVEN

I fall in love with you every time. Your nurturing ways make me melt.

TONI

I am not your mother!

BEETHOVEN

No one could replace her.

TONI

I thought I was your muse. But I didn't know my rival was Mother Earth!

BEETHOVEN

She's formidable. I have a direct link to Mother Earth!
Can't we share?

TONI

I do share, but you don't share. You want it all to yourself. You want her and me.

BEETHOVEN

I just write music. About stories. People. Poetry. Plays. And you. Your dress. The colors. How you fix your hair... You are my teacher, guide, inspiration...

TONI

Don't say this to me...

BEETHOVEN

Why? I take your writings seriously. You struggle with one word. The right word.

TONI

You read my poems?

BEETHOVEN

I do.

TONI

Finding the authenticity is so difficult.

BEETHOVEN

Like me. I know. I struggle with it. It's a serious business. The concert on Tuesday is too much for me.

TONI

I'll find a good driver for you and you can rest in the back. This is an important concert. My friend is very influential.

Beethoven sighs and walks towards the vista.

Steven comes down with more laundry.

STEVEN

I take it you're collecting dirty clothes.

He puts the clothes on her pile.

TONI

No, stop...

STEVEN

Just give it to your staff, please.

BEETHOVEN

Mother Nature promised me a perfect Saturday afternoon.

STEVEN

And then there's the rest of us who check the weather.

Ludwig plays around on the piano.
He writes them down.

Toni whispers to Steven.

TONI

Could you just smooth things out for me about going to Tuesday's concert? This will secure his place...

STEVEN

Well I try, but then you go mess it up.

TONI

I what? I haven't even taken care of myself. I've never worked this hard in my life...

STEVEN

Really? I play for Ludwig. And do his books. And catalogue. And take care of his laundry? And now you botch this up. You just inherited the wash.

Ludwig leaves the piano to
interrupt their whispering.

BEETHOVEN

(To Steven.)

She has a staff. I'm not a child. Don't treat me like a child.

TONI

I didn't treat you...

BEETHOVEN

Why did you hire her to manage me?

STEVEN

Presently no one is managing...

BEETHOVEN

I like it better that way.

Beethoven goes back to tinker on
the piano.

TONI

I have a resume. This is all silliness. I've made many good decisions for you, Louie. You were trying to run it like a corporation.

STEVEN

What's wrong with that model? Do you know how much music he writes? I'm just asking you not to be like a heavy in your position and let us know if Ludwig wants to do it or not before you ask us.

TONI

You never said anything about Ludwig.

STEVEN

I assumed you spoke to him first?

BEETHOVEN

You have lots of rules Antonia.

She collects herself to exit.

TONI

I have rules? I've broken all the rules. I broke all my rules for you! Okay you guys let me know what you decide. I'll do the phone calls and emails. When you need me, just ring a bell. Oh I'm sorry, it might be the wrong tone. Just shout. Ludwig likes shouting better.

BEETHOVEN

And when do you leave?

TONI

Now!

She exits.

BEETHOVEN

She loves me. But not like you. Female love. Inherent complications. They always have to consider their orgasm. Oh now let's breath. Should we walk first? I have a new trail through the woods. Through the back past the red barn. Oh Steven, first arrange a rehearsal at 4.

STEVEN

Oh no, Ludwig. You gave them the evening off.

BEETHOVEN

Today? Yesterday they had the day off. They're all back?

STEVEN

It's their only evening with the families.

BEETHOVEN

Oh....yeah...I see...

STEVEN

What am I going to tell them?

Ludwig carefully looks through the music sheets. He divides them.

Eroica is piped in. Ludwig dreams
and speaks the conducting .

BEETHOVEN

It's the first two notes. 45 minutes. Da da. I want to look
at everyone's position. You'll conduct. Just the Allegro.
Okay? Oh no. You can't conduct. I want to see the first
notes.

STEVEN

You're going to watch me?

BEETHOVEN

The core. The cellists are in the right position. But I
picture their elbows up in the air. Could that be? That
they start like that ? Mezzo. It should be punctuated!
Their arms must be look like this.

Imitates the cellist of the first
movement, first two notes. He
sings it, with his gestures a bit
over dramatic and the notes are
atonal and flat.

BEETHOVEN

I don't hear it. I don't hear the strike of the string.
Just the strings? We'll work with the strings. You told me
that my timing is off and why shouldn't I correct that?

STEVEN

I'll see what I can arrange.

Ludwig runs to grab a folder of
music sheets. Pulls them out to
explain the music.

BEETHOVEN

Here make 4 copies. I want you to grab a poster when you
get into town. Get a few.

(referring to music sheets)

Buy some extra rosin. I'll pay for it. No excuse then on
how difficult my music can be on their bows. Here. Just 2
copies. I'm starting an Opera. How many operas does Mozart
have?

STEVEN

22.

Steven takes the stacks of papers and exits SR.

Alone, suddenly he capitulates to his body and his gastro pain. He gets up to take his medication. He takes out a full medical bag and swallows several pills. He takes out hearing aids and puts them in his ears before he approaches the piano. Hesitantly he sits and then begins to play the scale. Some of the notes are inaudible as he hears them with difficulty. He tinkers with the hearing aids and the sound of the piano.

The bell rings. He hears the bell. The bell rings again and he removes the hearing aids.

BEETHOVEN

It's open! Come in!

Beethoven surprised by Jimmy's appearance, tries to look calm as he spins towards him. Jimmy is accompanied by his beautiful red haired starlet, 19 year old Valery.

BEETHOVEN

James.

JIMMY

Jimmy. Hey how are ya? And this is Valery Mosay. Ludwig Von Beethoven.

BEETHOVEN

Oh such blue eyes.

VALERY

Oh yeah. You like blue eyes?

BEETHOVEN

Who doesn't?

JIMMY

My Louie! I saw the fliers. The posters. Very impressive. This is moving up, huh? Big town for a musician like you.

BEETHOVEN

Composer.

JIMMY

Oh? Again. I'm being ignorant. Excuse me. Composer. I'm like a guy who calls rehearsal, practice. My actors keep laughing at me. She loves me for my sense of humor.

VALERY

Who says?

BEETHOVEN

He does.

JIMMY

I'm here. Up the road from you. Shooting a movie. I'm producing.

BEETHOVEN

With the backings of your father's friend's again?

JIMMY

Nah. We're setting up right here. At the red barn. (Pulls out the flier.) Your assistant came by to check it out. She told me you were buying it. Did I hear that right? You're a big deal now. Cause I'm very impressed. Ludwig Von Beethoven's "Erotica". I had no idea. Pretty sexy ad.

BEETHOVEN

Eroica.

Being young, Valery has an awkwardness about her, though she's very flirty.

JIMMY

Are you sure?

BEETHOVEN

Yes.

JIMMY

You're kidding me? Eroica...Let me see. (Unfolds a poster from his pocket and reads it.) You got the potential of erotic and you purposely call it eroita...?

VALERY

Eroica! Are you deaf!

JIMMY

Whoa, Valery, inside voice. Have a seat. You got no manners, Louie. Take care of the lady. She's hungry. Over there, honey. That looks comfortable. So what are you composing now? You got papers all around. You're still a mess. Offer her a glass of water. You wanna glass of water Valery?

VALERY

I can get it myself.

BEETHOVEN

I wrote a symphony! We're performing... full orchestra... on Saturday in Tanglewood. Eroica means hero.

JIMMY

Oh, now it makes sense. You wrote about yourself. I said you were a narcissist. This guy Val, no ability, but he can talk as long as one person is in the room. Even if you leave the room.

BEETHOVEN

Why would I call myself a hero?

JIMMY

That's how you talk. That's how you brand yourself... that's how you got my parents hooked. You know what Val, this guy created Ludwig Von Beethoven. It's a character. Bravo, Louie.

BEETHOVEN

My symphony is for all men and women. The hero rises above sicknesses and obstacles and works. Sacrifices...

JIMMY

Ah that's a great story. You should put that in your advertising campaign. Everyone is a hero. I like that. Come hear my music and find your hero, not to be mixed up with the more successful porn movie next door, Erotica. I might make that one, Louie? You're a little bit short sighted when it's about money even though you know who to ask. (Mocking laugh.)

BEETHOVEN

Thank you for coming by. It's a thrill to see you. Maybe my secretary can send you tickets?

JIMMY

So it's just music? What's the rest of the concert? Where's the thrill? Keep them engaged.

Beethoven engages with Valery as
he only speaks to her.

BEETHOVEN

I begin with a life worth composing for. I have words in my heart. That feel like honor and sacrifice. But then my hero disappoints me. So it must be spiritual. Universal. Then I imagine the life that is attached to all hero's. Do I look like a hero to you?

VALERY

I don't know? Maybe? Yeah.

BEETHOVEN

I do?

VALERY

Yeah. You look miserable. You have dark brown eyes. I kinda like that.

BEETHOVEN

I am miserable. You can see that in my face?

VALERY

Ah-ha.

JIMMY

I got dark eyes. Maybe I'm a hero?

VALERY

Not like him.

JIMMY

How do you know?

BEETHOVEN

You do nothing that's heroic.

JIMMY

Oh wow! What's that? Don't answer. I'm a producer. Take the high road. Yeah. I'm not going to answer you. I'm a movie producer. I know what's what. One of your problems is you don't know what's what. You never asked if I wanted to listen to your music. You just played. Could you tell I was bored? I yawned real loud. "Music soothes the savage breasts." To be frank, I lost friends over your constant playing. Screeching violins and the bigger one that sounds even worse.

BEETHOVEN

Viola?

JIMMY

No. The one you have to spread your legs.

BEETHOVEN

A cello never screeches.

JIMMY

It whines. Should only be played at a cemetery. Keep writing obituary tunes... I can't wait for the reviews!

BEETHOVEN

You owe me money.

JIMMY

I owe you? I think that's vice versa. That's part of my visit.

BEETHOVEN

Good! Then, we're even. You owe me, I owe you. We're done!

JIMMY

Wait a minute...

BEETHOVEN

You'll enjoy Eroica. This time not all screeching violins. Lots of wind instruments. Your specialty. And percussions. You like percussion modality, Mademoiselle? You'll come to my concert. We have flutes and clarinets, tympani...

JIMMY

You're a funny little man.

VALERY

You live here alone?

JIMMY

He was my parents pet.

BEETHOVEN

Lovely people. They have an apartment at the Dakota.

JIMMY

Yeah a little too generous. Anyway they tell me this musician needs a home for awhile and since I'm going out of town, why don't I lend him my apartment? But he needs it before I leave. So we're roomies.

BEETHOVEN

I was preparing for a recital nearby and I was very grateful to have a place so close.

JIMMY

It's a big apartment but he's not contained. I'm busy packing and he's making one mess on top of another with pills and the kitchen plates. You never washed a plate! Gadgets and your freakin' music drove me nuts. We're not even.

BEETHOVEN

I think we are.

JIMMY

Ludwig.

VALERY

Ludwig? I thought he was Leonard? You called him Louis? Wait what's your name. What should I call you?

BEETHOVEN

Sweetheart.

JIMMY

That's his thing. Every girl I brought home. Mr. Piano.
Hands off little man.

VALERY

What kind of music would you play for me?

Jimmy is starting to lose his
control.

JIMMY

Valery is the star of my movie, Leonard. Okay, I'm going to
be less friendly now. I'm not going to tell you the red
barn. I bought it. I might make a studio for myself cause I
make movies. Don't get too hooked on him. I'm usually a
gentleman but I didn't want to bring this up. You gave me a
piece of music. You remember?

BEETHOVEN

I do.

JIMMY

It was part of your debt.

BEETHOVEN

You accepted it and we were even.

JIMMY

I paid for every meal. Every taxi. I bought you clothes...I
was dating Julia.

BEETHOVEN

You were leaving her for your road trip to Italy...

JIMMY

I wanted her to have something from me....

BEETHOVEN

The ballerina. It seemed so ludicrous. But that's what you
asked for. Do you know I said to you that some people know
my work?

JIMMY

I'm not saying you're not lucky but I'm going to enjoy this bomb. I think you told me something different about the music you gave me.

BEETHOVEN

It's not my problem you didn't believe me. Everyone else knows it.

JIMMY

Oh yeah the whole world.

BEETHOVEN

After Eroica they will know Beethoven! They will know my 1st and 2nd! And all the other pieces I write!

Pipes in opening of first movement
Symphony 1 as the dialogue
continues. Beethoven is enraged
with his own behavior and begins
to float away from the
confrontation.

BEETHOVEN

I apologize for your musical faux pas. I can see it has caused great pain to your ego. Julia was a lovely ballerina. Telling her you composed it was a vanity. No harm. You should go back to her and give me Valery.

JIMMY

Hey, I'm asking you to cool it with my ladies.

BEETHOVEN

I know! I love you and your family! I gave you a rainbow. A piece of my music. I made you the man of today. Because of me!

JIMMY

You made me the man I am today?

BEETHOVEN

Exactly...

JIMMY

How?

BEETHOVEN

I have that affect. You like music?

Beethoven turns to Valery.

VALERY

I'm an actress.

JIMMY

I saw at least a 100 girls...

VALERY

1000 different faces...

JIMMY

Never saw anyone like her.

BEETHOVEN

You're very good at picking out faces.

JIMMY

I have talent.

Ludwig returns to mind as his music fills the air. Eroica pipes in as the first movement concludes it's final pages.

JIMMY

Look at that. There we are. The crew is setting up a long dolly track. Ludwig, I'm making a great movie.

Beethoven does not hear him.

JIMMY

Based on a real story. You got money? Invest. Romance will never be the same. This is the story of the greatest Courtesan that ever lived and how she destroyed the men she was involved with. Okay? It's kings, dukes and like all the Royalties. They're all tangled up with her. She's got complete political control. And she falls in love with a soldier who's really a vegetarian. Because of the vegetarian soldier's connection to the courtesan he starts selling his food and becomes very wealthy and the King wants to kill him. An old farm widow shows him the red barn.

She says that he can time travel to escape death but he must find a woman to do it with him and guess who he picks? The courtesan! And then they both time travel to start a new generation of people. That's how vegetarianism started. Is that an original idea?! Fantastic writer. And gorgeous Valery is the courtesan? Right? Twirl around honey. Does she look like you want to pay for it all. Those lips? That face. Just the face alone. Everything darling. Everything looks good. So they beam into the present day into the birth of our nation. The red barn.

BEETHOVEN

The red barn is the portal?

JIMMY

It's symbolic.

BEETHOVEN

Of course.

JIMMY

The actor's a pain in the ass.

VALERY

Gorgeous.

BEETHOVEN

Like me.

VALERY

Oh, yes. Really strong too! He picks me up in the air and I feel like a little birdie.

BEETHOVEN

I could pick you up like a ball of cotton..

VALERY

You could?

BEETHOVEN

Of course.

Beethoven picks her up and spins her around.

BEETHOVEN

A little bird.

JIMMY

All right enough. I don't want anyone to get hurt. Put her down.

BEETHOVEN

She loves the vegetarian or the soldier?

VALERY

Cause he's so handsome...

BEETHOVEN

A woman's heart cannot just be captured by a handsome man. Seems a little facile? I would have a bigger reason to time travel.

JIMMY

Love.

BEETHOVEN

Why the love?

JIMMY

She's beautiful. That's enough for people who lived way back then like in the 1800's.

BEETHOVEN

Valery, my darling you are more beautiful than most, surrounded by powerful men who adore you and now you're going to leave all of this for a vegetarian. She leaves her time on earth and moves to a different time. Why?

JIMMY

You don't like my movie?

BEETHOVEN

It's very exciting.

JIMMY

Love is the point. It's beauty that time travels. Get it?

BEETHOVEN

So it's a metaphor. James I have rubbed off on you! Did you read Goethe? Goethe time travels!

Beethoven plays his piano and
disappears into his music.

Valery runs up to him and
Beethoven smiles.

BEETHOVEN

Hello.

VALERY

Hey.

JIMMY

Yeah. He don't know we're here. You turn around and ignore us, don't you. See! Like he's the only one living. I hated it when you ignored me! He's nuts. Oh my God! What am I thinking? I'm talking to you? A concert? And you're more nuts than before.

Jimmy runs to face Beethoven.

JIMMY

You came begging to my family cause you couldn't hold on to a position!

BEETHOVEN

That's not true. I never beg.

JIMMY

I gave you 3 good connections...

BEETHOVEN

And that's why I'm here.

JIMMY

What?

BEETHOVEN

Because of your connections.

JIMMY

Who's that?

BEETHOVEN

Well it's not direct. I mean your mother introduced me to her friends.

JIMMY

That's my mother. Always helping out. All right take it easy. She loves musicians. I can see the shoot from here. Let's go Val.

BEETHOVEN

I performed at your parent's holiday party. Antonia was invited And it was there where we rekindled our love.

VALERY

Oh? You're married?

BEETHOVEN

No. I'm deeply in love.

VALERY

You're not talking about me?

BEETHOVEN

I..uh, just met you. Afterwards. After the concert we'll be in love.

JIMMY

I thought I as leaving on good terms?

BEETHOVEN

And James. Jimmy! You'll come to the concert too! We'll all be in love!

JIMMY

With you? No thank you.

BEETHOVEN

My dear cousin, I like to call you cousin

JIMMY

Not related to you by facto...

but you are not really from my family. You are blessed with bottomless support and gracious living. Whatever your artistic endeavors may be, it is assured of success.

JIMMY

Because of what I do. Because of the projects I pick. Val, get your purse.

BEETHOVEN

You have it in front of you! It's easy! And now you have Beauty and money and you're making a timeless movie! What more could you want?

JIMMY

If you have fifty dollars after this concert, that would take care of your part of all the broken glasses.

BEETHOVEN

(To Valery)

When Eroica begins let your head rest against the seat and close your eyes. Feel the music. It's loud. I've put power into my crescendo. It will grab you up and release you into the sky. ...don't think. Except of me.

Jimmy grabs Valery and exits.

End of Act I

ACT II

Later that afternoon.

Ludwig is in his rapture as the funeral part of Eroica plays through his mind. He is conducting.

Steven is filing and organizing a massive amount of Beethoven's music, notes and other papers.

Steven takes one pile of music sheets to show Ludwig.

STEVEN

None of these are protected.

BEETHOVEN

Shhhh....

STEVEN

But this one you want me to mail out?

BEETHOVEN

Oh dear Steven, what?

Music stops. As Steven hands him the music sheet and envelop to be addressed.

STEVEN

You want me to mail this out? It has no numbers, no name no...

BEETHOVEN

Which one? Which one are you talking about?

STEVEN

This piece you're giving away as a gift, right? For a birthday party.

BEETHOVEN

Yes! Yes. There's no problem. The postage protects it. It's just a little Minuet for the Hapsburg's in Austria. They've learned the Minuet. They wanted to dance to a Minuet. That's all. Send a note. I'm sorry Steven but I'm so unhappy at the moment. I can't find it. There's a rhythmic imbalance. It weighs too heavy. Exactly what it is? Why am I suffering? Do you know I'm suffering?

STEVEN

Performance flutters. Calm yourself down and maybe we should stop working in the office and take a rest? We have rehearsal soon.

Beethoven walks towards his vista
hoping to see birds.

Steven follows.

BEETHOVEN

Ducks are good swimmers. But abrupt and clumsy when they land. It's almost like a shock to them. "Oh now we're landing!?" You think they re-discover? They swim? They fly? Geese are also terrible when they land. Doesn't make sense? Why aren't their landings better? I think swans glide into the water. Why don't they all glide into the water. If I didn't glide into the water, I wouldn't be a water bird? When you bow, do you glide like a swan or land like a duck?

Steven walks up to Beethoven as
they speak to each other and faces
him directly.

STEVEN

I glide. But I'm not a swan.

BEETHOVEN

You don't mate for life?

STEVEN

Not yet.

BEETHOVEN

You want to?

STEVEN

I do. But...

BEETHOVEN

Me either. I've given up.

STEVEN

Bad fliers.

BEETHOVEN

Who?

STEVEN

The swans.

BEETHOVEN

Wonderful fliers. They have it all.

Steven breathes.

STEVEN

Different from when we didn't know where we were going.

BEETHOVEN

In Prague?

STEVEN

That's a story. Well between our bags and books and my violin case, and the hot cab melting the chocolate ice cream you insisted...

BEETHOVEN

The best chocolate ice cream!

STEVEN

5 concerts in one day.

BEETHOVEN

At the same Music Hall. What an easy time.

STEVEN

Sonata's. not one alike...

BEETHOVEN

People stayed all day to listen.

STEVEN

We will drive ourselves to an early grave. Still would have made the same money playing one piece.

BEETHOVEN

My dear Steven you are the best violinist in the world but you have never been a composer...To hear the same piece over and over again...

STEVEN

I don't mind. I don't mind playing the same piece all day. I get better.

BEETHOVEN

What? Who's that? Kep header?

STEVEN

I get better when I play it over and over.

STEVEN

So you know what I'm thinking.

BEETHOVEN

I know what you're saying, but I don't know what you're thinking.

STEVEN

I'm saying exactly what I'm thinking.

BEETHOVEN

Okay, then say it.

STEVEN

What are you looking at?

BEETHOVEN

I'm looking at you.

STEVEN

Are you reading my lips.

BEETHOVEN

I'm not reading your lips!

STEVEN

Is there something you want to tell me?

BEETHOVEN

Are you asking me if I have to read your lips to understand you? A man who composes music. Ironic in its purest sense. Handing me the deaf sentence.

He laughs at his own pun. Steven
laughs too.

STEVEN

Well I know that its not possible. How could it be? It would stop you and you don't stop. No. I'm just saying perhaps your cold is getting worse? You forget to eat.

Music stops.

BEETHOVEN

Yes.

STEVEN

And sleep.

BEETHOVEN

Yes. And love.

STEVEN

Should I take out my violin?

BEETHOVEN

Later, you can mourn for me. Everything depends on tomorrow! If I'm wrong about Eroica...?

STEVEN

You're not.

Beethoven pulls up folding chairs and spreads his music on the floor. He sits down as he organizes the music.

Every time Beethoven moves, his chair squeaks. Steven, jumps to the squeak. Beethoven does not hear it.

BEETHOVEN

Four days. I hear this one tune. (Hums a piece of "Pastoral" as they read it.) Okay?

He runs back to the piano to play the theme of "Pastoral".

Plays the piano and it's not quite the sound of Pastoral

BEETHOVEN

It still does not capture the morning sun. The way I see it. I do not see it from the horizon. I see it from the sky. From the tops of the trees.

Ludwig takes the bench to sit with Steven.

Steven looks around to see what is squeaking and realizes it is Beethoven's bench.

BEETHOVEN

What is it?

STEVEN

Doesn't it bother you?

BEETHOVEN

Your getting up all time? Yes!

STEVEN

I was just looking to see where this terrible squeak and its your bench...

BEETHOVEN

My bench?

STEVEN

Don't you hear it?

BEETHOVEN

Hear what? My bench! When are the musicians arriving?

STEVEN

Four. Here. I'll just put a rug under there and you won't hear it any more. Maybe it'll make the sun rise for you?

BEETHOVEN

You have attention deficit.

Steven and Beethoven tussle with the rug.

Music from Eroica 2nd movement
continues is piped in.

BEETHOVEN

It's fine this way. I'm not moving.

STEVEN

Yes you are! You keep jumping up and down. You can't hear that squeak?

BEETHOVEN

No!

STEVEN

Well its squeaking all through my head and maybe I need a nap! A nap!

BEETHOVEN

Get the musicians now.

STEVEN

They'll be here at 4.

BEETHOVEN

What? The musicians are sleeping? You think they're sleeping in?

STEVEN

Resting up. Maybe? Most of them went to the Haydn concert last night. I'm sure they went to a bar afterwards..

Music stops.

BEETHOVEN

Haydn? They stayed up all night for Haydn?

STEVEN

I didn't say they stayed up all night for Haydn. I said they stayed up with each other. They're all friends. They had drinks?

BEETHOVEN

Why would they listen to Haydn? They didn't come to Toni's party. I don't know whether to be insulted or jump in to a quick tutorial on brain washing. Get rid of their Haydnness! It's very easy to be influenced!

Right before playing Beethoven you're going to listen to Haydn? His music sounds rote. It sucks you dry. Dry as Haydn.

Beethoven mocks it with Symphony No. 86 in D Major: IV. Finale on the piano. Dramatically he leaves the piano.

BEETHOVEN

We're doomed. We're totally doomed! The orchestra will be Haydenized! Eroica will be filtered through Haydn and pooped out like a bored vegetarian!

Beethoven piles all the sheets together as Steven tries to protest.

STEVEN

Oh please don't shuffle them together. I don't believe it will influence their playing...

BEETHOVEN

Well if we're all running around listening to other composers...I would think it would be something you avoid? What did they play?

STEVEN

Haydn's...

Music is piped in from Eroica as the 2nd movement continues.

BEETHOVEN

Drip of repetition. Pleasant monotony, I'm sure. Don't tell me. I don't care.

STEVEN

The Papa was a very good teacher...

BEETHOVEN

Exactly like my father's instructions. Four hours of academic practice. Numbing exercises. An eternity for a 3 year old.

STEVEN

Well your father was more than just an instructor. His issues...

BEETHOVEN

An issue? At 6. My father was disappointed at my slow physical growth. Imagine? It was up to me to grow. I had short stubby fingers! My fault. He was so unhappy with me that he beat me to play better... practice, practice. His fists would rap on my back like a metronome and beat out the rhythm. (He raps on wood.) "Da-da-de-dah! Sit up! Da-da-de-dah stretch wider! Pound those scales!" Still balancing on pillows and books because I was too little to reach the pedals! I didn't know I could breath without his permission.

STEVEN

Ludwig you must not think of these things. Put it away! Put away the horrors. Like we all do!

BEETHOVEN

Even while he was away! He demanded the ritual of practice. Daily. Weekly. Monthly. And I did it. Even if he wasn't there. Up and down the scales. Nothing else. Dull, dull exercises. And then dear Steven, Providence. Papa leaves for work as usual but it's a bitter cold morning and Mama bakes bread to warm the house. Something changes in me. From the smell of the bread. The vanilla. (Hums a bit of music.) The butter melting. The spoons. A soft puff of air, from a cup of flour. It was music. I found a little melody. The notes just came out. Her fingers kneading and my fingers untethered, dancing across the keys.

STEVEN

Marvelous! Marvelous!

Steven wipes his tears.

BEETHOVEN

And then she sings it back to me. What is this? I felt my heart flutter. She's singing my song? My song? I had never loved more than that moment. Her voice was like an angel! I was out of my mind! Ticklish! Chills with big goosebumps...so much laughing. I'm laughing. And she's wiping her tears, covered in flour, forgetting the darkness. Until I see a shadow cross my mother's face.

Her eyes, black. My father was standing at the door. He came back for his briefcase. And in a second, like a clash of thunder, he grabs the leather satchel and hurls it at me! Bashing my ear. And then he lurches, as I fall, to grab the back of my hair and twists my neck into his arm pit.

STEVEN

It's all in the past.

BEETHOVEN

Then he drags me off to the back of the house. I didn't have time to stand up! My legs dangling behind me! And my arms blocking his punches to my face and ears. Trying to protect my body from my father!

STEVEN

Why didn't your mother stop this?!

BEETHOVEN

She was afraid. She didn't want to see. He dragged me into the back room. The back room with the rented piano. No one could have sounded good. Not even Mozart! "Please! Please! Please, don't lock me in!"

STEVEN

That you weren't repelled by music altogether is a miracle...

BEETHOVEN

In a strange way, I was safe. In that piano prison. No one was allowed in that room. It was my father's room... My mother was forbidden to enter. Never cleaned. Maybe 5 x 9. So not much in the room. Upright. Bench. A bookcase. Dirty. Slime covered bookcase. But it had its entreaties. Books I should have never seen. I was there for hours. My father lacked an imagination. Play in my Grandfather's orchestra. Have a retirement plan. He just wanted me to be a good musician. I could not stop writing. It was for my mother, hoping she would hear my songs one day. I could not stop composing. He knew it. He found my compositions and punched my head and slapped me off the bench again and again and made me sleep in that room.

STEVEN

Oh my friend...

Eroica pipes in.

BEETHOVEN

Go away. Go...go...

STEVEN

I know your father was not well. But he loved you...

BEETHOVEN

He did not, Steven. He damaged me. The poor soul. Imagine being a lousy musician sandwiched between two geniuses. My grandfather, a composer, singer musical director and then me. The greatest genius! A victim of his own biology.

STEVEN

One time when he was drunk...

BEETHOVEN

One time...

STEVEN

He couldn't even lift his leg... He fell over the curb.

BEETHOVEN

A broken ankle...

STEVEN

That was the night we saw Mozart's "Cosi Van Tutte" and you were so mad...

BEETHOVEN

Oh yes... ahh such brilliance. We were trying to sneak back steal my father's bottles!

STEVEN

And you were angry with me. Never before! We never had one fight! God, you were in a rage.

BEETHOVEN

You said put him to bed and let him sleep it off. Like he was some bum...without any regard that he's my father with a broken ankle.

STEVEN

I didn't know what to do? I was in shock.

BEETHOVEN

I had to help because of my poor mother. Being with a man like that! In public. You just stood there when I carried him inside. I was ashamed.

STEVEN

But he punched and kicked and yelled while you carried him.

BEETHOVEN

He never stops hitting me! My father drank! And when he drank he was lousy! Fraud. He knew it. He hated that I knew it. That's why he did terrible things to me. I took his will away. I stopped him from being successful... and he prevented me from being a normal man. The damage is done. I live with my pain. And when it's intolerable, I stick my head into a basin of frozen water to ease my head on ice.

STEVEN

The tinnitus?

BEETHOVEN

The ringing? Yes. That's the least of the illnesses.

STEVEN

If you're sick, my dear Ludwig. There's an herbalist in West Stockbridge. She'll make a brew. Maybe you have a fever?

BEETHOVEN

Perhaps.

STEVEN

Vitamins. More vitamins.

Steven goes about organizing the living room as Beethoven exits to bedroom.

Toni enters. Hangs up her outerwear and removes her shoes before entering. Toni puts flowers in a vase.

TONI

Ludwig?

Jimmy walks in. He's wheeling a truckload of water bottles. Jimmy dumps the water bottles near the kitchen.

JIMMY

Then to her surprise she realizes she loves this vegetarian man and they get over their fight. Transport to our future where it's happening which is metaphorically, the red barn. The symbol of new life. So I'm not so sure I want to sell it. It might be turned into a museum.

TONI

Oh don't come in with your boots on, he always walks around barefoot.

He takes off his shoes obligingly.

JIMMY

And happily ever after...

TONI

Shhh. Be quiet. Ludwig's resting.

JIMMY

Oh quiet for his highness. You got to be putting me on. This act for him? It's gotta be a scam? Yeah but you're digging the glory.

TONI

I wish you all the luck then. I'll tell Ludwig you won't ell the red barn.

JIMMY

I tell you what? I'd like to rent this house for a week and we could do all the interiors here. You know this is a fantastic house to shoot in. With all the views. The bedrooms have views like this too?

TONI

Excuse me?

JIMMY

I'm just asking?

(Jimmy looks around the house.)

No walls upstairs too? All windows? You don't know if you're inside or out. I can offer you 10 grand for the week but Ludwig has to move out. (He looks out of the front view.) I like this. I like this a lot.

TONI

The bedrooms have walls. Interior walls.

JIMMY

Really? You probably want to recoup some of your investment as soon as you can and I'm thinking this offer could come in handy right now?

TONI

Ten grand up front?

JIMMY

Yeah.

TONI

When do you want to move in?

JIMMY

Tomorrow?

TONI

Not tomorrow. Sunday. Sunday he'll stay at my house. We're leaving Tuesday. You'll be out by the following Saturday. That's when we return.

JIMMY

You're a beautiful woman. Super sharp. I mean smart. And cultured. Very cultured pearls. I'll give you 10,000. Tomorrow. But he's out.

TONI

There are many other houses. Take mine.

JIMMY

Wait a minute. Wait a minute.

Steven comes running out.

STEVEN

I thought we closed our doors to the public?

JIMMY

Listen we're having a little chat about renting this house.

STEVEN

You're discussing this with him?

TONI

We just walked in.

JIMMY

I'm giving you some good money and no one turns down...

TONI

I will tell Ludwig you were here...

STEVEN

Don't bother Antonia.

Toni gets up into Jimmy's face.

TONI

I've known Ludwig all my life! I don't know who you are. He was my teacher. My friend... He's not one of us! Especially you. He does not play this game! So don't give out any advice.

Toni exits for the bathroom.

STEVEN

Now you've done it. You've achieved what most people have never seen. Antonia losing her cool. If you don't mind my asking you...

JIMMY

To leave?!

STEVEN

Oh that's a good one.

JIMMY

Don't even think about telling me to leave! No one, especially leeches like you can tell me to leave. I was throwing money at your little friend there. 10 grand and she turned it down.

STEVEN

That's right. You have your coat? Oh you never took it off. We have to get ready for our little rehearsal today. Our Maestro cannot be kept waiting. Have a nice day.

Steven escorts Jimmy to the door

JIMMY

I see him for what he is. If you want to know the real reason why he's nuts...

STEVEN

The door is hard sometimes. You have to pull it.

JIMMY

Tell Louie he's not getting the barn.

Jimmy exits SR and slams door behind him.

Toni comes out when she is sure Jimmy's left.

TONI

There's going to be more of that.

STEVEN

We're leeches? Well he's a sycophant. 10 grand?

TONI

For a week. Starting tomorrow.

STEVEN

You agreed to this?

TONI

Why do you rush to that answer?

STEVEN

You always think you have to take control. You always try to manage.

TONI

I am much more in tune with Ludwig's moods. It was only last year when he tried to kill himself. I learned. I learned to read his moods...

STEVEN

You read his mind? No one knew that would happen. You certainly did not know. I was away...

TONI

So was I. Falling in love, I thought. I'm completely devoted to Eroica.

STEVEN

Do you taste his food before he eats it?

TONI

I heard your paper cuts were so severe you once couldn't play a concerto.

They both laugh.

STEVEN

I still organize his works.

TONI

I'm horrible with paper work.

STEVEN

You love Ludwig more than your husband?

TONI

Only because he is more than my husband.

Steven continues to collect and clean up as he is about to exit the house.

There is a deep silence between them.

TONI

May I drop you off somewhere?

STEVEN

I have to go to West Stockbridge. Ludwig is coming down with a cold. They have a wonderful herbalist. These colds get worse every season.

ACT III

The morning after rehearsal.

Eroica's Scherzo, 3rd movement
pipes in as Beethoven enters the
living room, wearing a robe. He is
deliriously happy. There is a
skip in his walk.

He finds a water bottle and drinks
it down with gusto.

BEETHOVEN

Steven!

The music stops.

Finds a written note on the
counter.

BEETHOVEN

"Luigi, you have no fruit! I'm getting bananas!" Sick of
bananas. Steven!

He glides around with the music of
the Scherzo. His speech weaves
through the Music as he relives
the rehearsal..

BEETHOVEN

It went well. It went well. Oh my God. That was good. The
cello's. Damn it! They're good. Steven! You're right.
Eroica. I love you!

(He stands still looking out
into the vista.)

I will buy me independence? Without obligations! I will buy
this and my own orchestra. All for a deaf man.

He stumbles away from the vista
and sits down clumsily at the
piano and plays what he shouts.

BEETHOVEN

C sharp! D minor. F sharp! F sharp! Where does the music go
when I can't hear it? In here. (Holds his forehead.) It
stays in here.

Listening to F sharp is dim in
sound for Ludwig.

BEETHOVEN

C sharp. D minor. F sharp. F sharp. F sharp.

He sings the note but its flat.

He moves closer to the piano to
hear his playing. He carefully
pulls out the hearing aide from a
box in his pocket and puts them in
his ears. He plays the theme of
the scherzo as he climbs all over
the piano.

Valery, wearing a period piece
costume, slowly enters the house,
lightly knocking on the furniture
and walls as she gets closer.

Beethoven sees the shadow but does
not look up.

BEETHOVEN

Got your bananas?

He looks up and Valery's beauty
steals his breath away, especially
in this costume.

Beethoven returns to the piano as
they hold their conversation. In
between, he plays little themes
and tunes.

BEETHOVEN

Well hello.

VALERY

I walked up here. From all the way down there. You know there' a path from your house straight to the red barn. It was like it was meant to be. They're just setting up now. Takes hours. I don't know why I'm here so early. You vape?

BEETHOVEN

Chardonnay?

VALERY

Oh wow? They make 'em with all kinds of flavors. Sure. Sounds gross. It helps my art.

Beethoven goes to the refrigerator
and takes out the wine to serve.

BEETHOVEN

Why are you dressed like that?

VALERY

It's the way I always dress.

BEETHOVEN

What?

VALERY

It's a costume stupid.

BEETHOVEN

Where's James?

VALERY

Jimmy?

BEETHOVEN

I thought he was always next to you. The pickle next to the burger.

VALERY

At the build. I mean, he's supervising. They like the barn but they have to build this dark thing that we come out of.

BEETHOVEN

They made your hair like a tower?

VALERY

It's a wig. Didn't they do a good job. They're geniuses.

BEETHOVEN

Yes, all geniuses. We're all petals on a brilliant flower. Your face is different.

VALERY

I'm a Courtesan with a lot of experiences, so I guess I look a little older. They painted wisdom on my face.

BEETHOVEN

A courtesan in the Berkshires?

VALERY

It's not supposed to be in the Berkshires.

BEETHOVEN

So why would you be here...?

VALERY

You don't have to be in the right place to make it look like the right place. It's a forest. We're just using trees.

BEETHOVEN

They look like modern trees.

VALERY

I never heard of that.

BEETHOVEN

You never heard of old trees? Where does she live? Is she French?

VALERY

No she speaks English like me.

BEETHOVEN

French trees were different. Especially in the 1800's.

VALERY

Like dinosaurs?

BEETHOVEN

Dinosaurs were no longer around in the 1800's.

VALERY

You never know in films.

BEETHOVEN

This forest has different decay. Blights. Acid rains. It's not authentic.

VALERY

Oh, wow, the trees speak to you. But I have to believe in it. It's my art to believe in whatever is put in my mouth.

BEETHOVEN

And this courtesan they've written for you, for your beauty, oh my there is something about you in that costume that makes me feel nostalgic....

VALERY

Nostalgic? For what? You want eat?

BEETHOVEN

Food?

She pulls her cell phone out of her dress.

VALERY

I'm nostalgic too? I'm hungry.

BEETHOVEN

There's no service here.

VALERY

There's no service here? Oh you gotta be nuts. What are you going to do? You have to get service. There's always service.

She climbs all over the living room looking for service.

The Scherzo pipes in.

VALERY

It's somewhere here. You just have to know how to find it. We had service in the red barn. I need to keep up eating. Oh my God. Oh my god. I have a big scene! I'm propelling into the new world. I need to eat!

BEETHOVEN

Eggs? I make a wonderful omelette.

VALERY

With what?

BEETHOVEN

Cheddar?

VALERY

I thought I would order pizza!

BEETHOVEN

We'll melt the cheddar. That's a pizza.

Valery is getting apoplectic.

VALERY

No, it's not! (Mumbles a small tantrum.) This is my truth. Ok. Now listen Louie.

BEETHOVEN

Yes, Valery, I'm listening.

VALERY

Nonna told me when I was a little that we had two kinds of women in the family. The regular and the bellissima, the beauty. But the bellissima only comes every 4 generations, out the Scicolone side. From cousins, uncles, sisters, normal men and women that look like average people out of that comes one baby that's the bellissima. And that's me. I must eat a piece of mozzarella.

BEETHOVEN

La donna più bella. (The most beautiful woman.)

VALERY

Mozzarella is the secret to beautiful breasts.

BEETHOVEN

You must eat pizza every day,

VALERY

I can eat it shaved on lettuce. Melted, doesn't matter but it has to be mozzarella. This is what keeps Italian women beautiful.

BEETHOVEN

How much more mozzarella do you need for that dress? It seems to fit fine.

VALERY

Oh my God, if I don't eat in fifteen minutes...

BEETHOVEN

They'll deflate?

VALERY

No. They're not balloons.

BEETHOVEN

But you have red hair. And blue eyes.

VALERY

Bellissima. I'm rare. I know.

He runs to his refrigerator to
check for the cheese.

BEETHOVEN

My friends feed me dried fruits and nuts.

VALERY

I heard that was good for your system but not for my breasts.

Valery starts to search for
service, sometimes climbing on a
chair.

BEETHOVEN

If you're really Italian, then you love music.

VALERY

What? I wasn't raised Italian. Not having service is rude!

BEETHOVEN

I'll play for you.

He runs to the piano and plays the scherzo theme for her.

VALERY

I think the music is blocking my satellite.

He finds his phone and helps her. Mockingly, and laughing in that tone.

BEETHOVEN

We must find you mozzarella! Let's look for it together. I never quit.

The scherzo of Eroica continues. Ludwig climbs around with her. He becomes charming in his clownishness.

BEETHOVEN

Here's one! Oh no. That feels more like a Planet. Planet connections are very strong.

VALERY

They're not that far up in the sky.

BEETHOVEN

Oh no?

VALERY

If I didn't have this dress on I probably could get connected. It's too tight for me to bend. I could have never been a woman at that time. You don't have to put your arms way up there.

BEETHOVEN

Well I'm trying to help you. We must get you the mozzarella!

VALERY

I never date guys like you. Musicians are not my type. I kinda go for the man in charge. Like the principal? But you did the school thing too. I didn't. I couldn't sit still. I just hated sitting still. Studying. There was no place to study. My Mom wanted me out of the house. You know philosophy and math?

BEETHOVEN

Oh yes, you must.

VALERY

I wanted to have guys like you. Do you like me?

BEETHOVEN

You're very likable?

VALERY

I need to be taken fast. Well I mean guys take me right away. Guys can be too fast. Like Jimmy. But it works for me. I need the leader. Well, I know I can't hold this phone all the way up to heaven.

BEETHOVEN

Heaven doesn't answer calls...

VALERY

Did you pray. I mean when you were a child?

BEETHOVEN

I did.

VALERY

And you stopped?

BEETHOVEN

I don't stop. I talk to my god regularly.

VALERY

Wow. Is He okay?

BEETHOVEN

No, He's not.

VALERY

I mean does He like you, when he talks to you?

BEETHOVEN

Oh yes. Very much so.

VALERY

You curse at him?

BEETHOVEN

Does it show?

VALERY

Yeah. You shouldn't do that. You should keep it to yourself.

BEETHOVEN

Then I'll keep praying.

She walks along the vista looking out with her phone.

Beethoven goes to her with both comfort and seduction in his movement.

VALERY

Nobody knows I'm here.

BEETHOVEN

You probably left a trail with your dress.

VALERY

Oh?

She looks at the bottom of her dress and sees branches. She laughs.

BEETHOVEN

Do you sing?

VALERY

No. We had TV.

BEETHOVEN

Everybody sings. Happy Birthday.

VALERY

No. No birthdays. No singing.

BEETHOVEN

Auld lang syne..

VALERY

Too many children.

BEETHOVEN

And no singing? Amazing Grace?

VALERY

One big party watching TV. No music.

BEETHOVEN

I'm sorry.

VALERY

I'm fine. I forgive you. Why are you sorry?

BEETHOVEN

So sweet, my little Vireo.

VALERY

You see you keep using those big words on me to put me down.

BEETHOVEN

A vireo is a bird. Let's sing.

VALERY

I can't sing.

BEETHOVEN

Yes. I can do teach you.

VALERY

You can't.

BEETHOVEN

Yes I can. One note. Give me one note. I'll turn around. You sing one note and you won't even see my reaction. Even if I do this (Makes a face.)

VALERY

I'm not. I'm not playing this.

BEETHOVEN

Oh come on, come on...Let me hear...

He turns around to wait.

She croaks out a note. A little shocked, Beethoven reduces it to a smile. He turns around kisses her and runs to the piano. He plays her note. It is very low, for a petite female.

BEETHOVEN

Again. Try this. A little higher.

She sings the note and Beethoven builds the music around her with the piano and singing, pointing to her for the one note.

BEETHOVEN

Again. When I point to you. Sing it twice. Ba-ba. (He sings it. She follows.) That's it! Now again.

A combining of her one note with Beethoven's playing, develops into "Ode to Joy". Exalted by this experience, Valery is flushed with her "Ode to Joy".

BEETHOVEN

Let's get married!

VALERY

We just met.

BEETHOVEN

You're saying yes to me?

VALERY

I don't want to live here.

BEETHOVEN

We can travel back to the 1800's, you could be my devoted wife!

VALERY

Let's get engaged. Do you have a ring?

Jimmy enters from SR without knocking.

JIMMY

Have you lost your mind! What the hell are you doing here? I've been calling you for like an hour. We're ready to shoot.

VALERY

There's no service!

JIMMY

(To Valery.)

They're all standing around and I'm looking for you. I figured you were out feeding the squirrels. What happened to your dress?

VALERY

I was dying for you to get me. I haven't been sitting!. I need a driver. I can't walk in this dress! I can't sit! Thank God you're half way smart and you figured where I was.

JIMMY

All right, all right...

VALERY

So they're all waiting for me? I have to go, Louie. You got pizza down on the set?

JIMMY

Yes. Yes. Extra cheese.

VALERY

You're so good to me. You get old fast, when you're mad. It's not attractive around your mouth. That's it. Now you look younger.

Jimmy grabs her by the arm and
whispers to her.

JIMMY

I knew you'd be here. You talked about him all night.

She pulls away to walk towards
Beethoven.

VALERY

What's the point? I'm here and its warm. You're setting up
for hours. He's got a nice place. I can lean, on nice
things. You want me to prepare? That's what I'm doing.
We're two artists. He's giving me music. I have to go
through a portal! Squeezing the life out of me before I
become the new woman. Well maybe his music is giving me an
idea! Bye sweetie-poo. I have to go now. I'm walking down.
I can't sit in a car!

BEETHOVEN

Bye my Joy.

Valery kisses him on the top of
his head before she exits SR.

Beethoven is beaming.

JIMMY

You know what's going to happen? I'm going to buy this
house. Let me make you an offer to get out of here.

BEETHOVEN

I had a wonderful rehearsal last night. Tomorrow's concert
will be...

JIMMY

Horrendous. Bad rehearsal, good concert.

BEETHOVEN

No, no it's much better to be well prepared. It wasn't
perfect. I didn't say it was perfect but it was
wonderful...

JIMMY

I'm telling you if you had a good rehearsal, the
performance will suck. Thing's just go wrong.

You're already too cocky and you can't control yourself. It's like Valery thinking she has all men in her power. She doesn't. And this is what I want to make clear. That property is mine. You don't touch!

BEETHOVEN

I had nothing to do with it. She appeared! You didn't introduce yourself as a couple.

JIMMY

The reason why she's making this movie is because we're a couple.

BEETHOVEN

I offered her marriage.

JIMMY

You want to marry her? You're not serious? You're never serious about anything. I forget you're such a flake.

BEETHOVEN

(he yells with a strange
voice quality.)

Stop it. I won't go near her. Tell her I'm not available. I'm getting married to another woman. Who I really love.

JIMMY

It's almost like you sounded deaf there. We had a deaf groundskeeper who yelled like that. You deaf Louie?

BEETHOVEN

I tune you out! Do you write music? Do you understand counter balance? What it means to work against sounds? When I hear you talk, that's how I think.

JIMMY

No you don't fool me. There's something wrong with you. You were playing, pounding the melody, your head up inside the piano...

BEETHOVEN

That's the way I listen to my music.

JIMMY

I get it. I'm an artist.

BEETHOVEN

Welcome!

JIMMY

Film is art!

BEETHOVEN

Obviously. (Pause.)

JIMMY

You got to work in film. Not play.

BEETHOVEN

Practice. Baseball players gymnasts, musicians.

JIMMY

My father shoved working down my throat. God forbid I wanted guitar lessons! Hold a paint brush? If I wanted to be close to my dear old dad, I needed to make money. So I did. Still do. I got my money from working. Playing your little shit piano. On top of your laziness, he hated you because my mother loved you...She got dressed up to take piano lessons. She never stopped talking about you. It was like she met the freakin' King of England.

BEETHOVEN

I adore Lydia. And she understands...

JIMMY

Oh yeah! I love my mother. Very much. She's a rare breed. When you left my apartment... disappeared... she was very concerned. She kept asking me to find you. She was more concerned about you, then what was happening with me...the mess you left behind... She didn't care about me.

BEETHOVEN

Your mother loved my music. It is an artistic connection...

JIMMY

We're all artists. All the world's a stage. I know that one. Listen, if you want to defend your life because music gives you a free pass, the artist...

BEETHOVEN

Okay let's call me a composer. I don't want to be called an artist. You're the artist.

JIMMY

Why? We're all artists.

BEETHOVEN

You're an orangutan!

JIMMY

Your music is shit. It's dead.

BEETHOVEN

How could it be dead when I'm still alive? Eroica renews life! Your script? Your story line? Its ridiculous. People time traveling is cliché.

JIMMY

Time travel is like the most popular idea in the universe. It's everyone's secret dream. We all want to escape our own lives and get a second chance some where else.

BEETHOVEN

My music will reach into the deepest part of sounds, to gather notes that can sweep across the soul. I want to touch the mind and catch a blissful memory. Ever evolving. Ever thinking. I'm not done. I'm not done at all. When Valery comes out of the portal let her evolve into her new universe. Let her feel the effects.

Music is piped in. Eroica's Scherzo continues to its final note, Steven and Toni fumble at the door. Shoes are removed and coats.

STEVEN (OFFSTAGE)

Good morning Maestro! I found your bananas.

TONI (OFFSTAGE)

Three stores before we found the perfect bunch!

BEETHOVEN

Steven, you left me alone.

Toni walks in surprised to see
Jimmy.

JIMMY

Oh, here's the wife. Good bye. You still owe me for the
water.

She digs in her pockets for money.

TONI

Here's a fifty. A good tip. Maestro the Magnificent! How do
you feel?

BEETHOVEN

I'm well! Farewell my artist!

She kisses Ludwig and looks for
her bag. Steven follows but he
immediately exits to the kitchen
with his shopping bags.

JIMMY

I just want to give you the change...

TONI

Administrative paper work. Thanks. The water's very
helpful. Take care.

JIMMY

All right. You too. Bye.

Jimmy exits.

Ludwig enters with "triple
concerto theme" piped in. He is
conducting and writing at the same
time. .

BEETHOVEN

What do people do just before a concert? Milling. Milling
and waving. And your favorite, Antonia. Chatting. "Where to
put the lawn chairs? Over there next to the speakers. Or
away from the loud speakers." And weather conversations.
Who's here?

And while that's being done I can play the piano. Right in the middle of it all. I need a piano. A bench.

STEVEN

You want the orchestra milling too?

BEETHOVEN

No. You'll come in. Like you always do. With nonchalance, and smugness. Fixing your chairs. Rattling the music stands. Reading my notes. You should read my notes first.

STEVEN

And you'll be sitting at the piano. In the middle of the lawn. Watching us read your notes.

Music is piped in of triple
concerto theme.

BEETHOVEN

And say my name.

TONI

A bit anti-climactic.

BEETHOVEN

No I think it's shocking. That I've been amongst the milling chatter.

Music stops.

BEETHOVEN

They almost can touch Ludwig von Beethoven? Should I let them touch me? If there's a pretty girl. Steven you play oboe...

STEVEN

I was playing nonchalant. An oboe?

BEETHOVEN

A milling piece...

STEVEN

From you?

BEETHOVEN

Something that sounds like planting bulbs. Violin and piano...

STEVEN

Antonia can announce your name from the stage.

TONI

I'm not going up on ..

BEETHOVEN

In that pale blue gown.

TONI

Oh? Like moonlight.

BEETHOVEN

Yes.

Beethoven runs to his piano. He plays a piece of the Triple concerto.

Steven takes the tray away to the kitchen.

BEETHOVEN

3 instruments. We need an oboe. A tulip bulb needs an oboe. Steven call the oboist. (He plays the violin piece of the concerto.) Back and forth. And the audience... what will they do when they hear such pretty music? You don't think it will interfere with Eroica? Do you think it would diminish Eroica? I don't want it to interfere with their anticipation.

STEVEN

Too much music?

BEETHOVEN

But not of mine.

Beethoven takes up pen and begins to conduct as Eroica's Scherzo pipes in to continue the 3rd movement.

Steven sets about straightening
up.

TONI

Could you write something for a movie?

BEETHOVEN

Did you talk to him? You didn't make a deal?

TONI

I didn't make a deal.

BEETHOVEN

Well I don't know. You're always do something behind my
back.

TONI

Behind your back?

BEETHOVEN

You married, behind my back.

TONI

You want Valery. I can see it in your eyes.
Tomorrow we have to be at Tanglewood by 10, let's say 10
thirty the latest. I'll pick you up..

STEVEN

You're not picking him up...

TONI

But I'm taking Ludwig to diner after rehearsal tonight and
then you can stay at my house.

BEETHOVEN

I'm not having dinner with you. You're bringing your
friends. I can't be with people who don't talk about music.

STEVEN

Rehearsal is here.

BEETHOVEN

Rehearsal is here. I'm not leaving. A bad rehearsal. We'll
have a bad rehearsal. Lots of chaos. Tell the musicians to
come drunk.

Tony sidles up to Ludwig and
speaks only to him.

TONI

Okay Ludwig would you like to stay over after the concert tomorrow? My house is much closer to Tanglewood. We can leave for Boston. I booked a hotel for us.

(Out loud to the room.)

Unless you're rooming with Steven?

STEVEN

Let's not change those plans.

BEETHOVEN

You don't want to room with me? You're still mad?

STEVEN

I'm not mad. I've learned. Never go back to hell. (To Toni.) Do you remember how hot it was in New York? That was the week we roomed together. I didn't have a place of my own...

BEETHOVEN

I'm loyal.

STEVEN

With no air conditioning. A window fan. Blowing hot, humid, street air.

BEETHOVEN

What a complainer! I had a bed for you and we went outside. Better not to be cooped up. Change of scenery. Anyway, we found a wonderful flea market.

STEVEN

Concrete schoolyard. No shade. 99 degrees. You were pretending it was cool and flapping your arms like you were freezing.

BEETHOVEN

I will my body to feel more temperate.

STEVEN

And then he has a big idea.

BEETHOVEN

My big Idea? Oh! It fell in front of me. Anyone, except you, would have done exactly what I did! This idiot throws out instruments!

STEVEN

Well that was true. The worker comes out with a trash bin..

BEETHOVEN

He just dumps the instruments. One Collector from the flea market runs over and starts grabbing as many as he can hold. So I run too, shoving him aside and grabbing whatever I could hold.

STEVEN

He's screaming, Steven, grab them all!

BEETHOVEN

Didn't it make you sick? He was shoving them under the table! He didn't even know if the cases were closed. Just throwing them under the table. I could see the greed. Money. So I offered it. How much for the whole orchestra? He's sweating as he counts because he has to bend and multiply...

STEVEN

It's the hottest day on earth and he's buying an orchestra. Broken instruments.

BEETHOVEN

I paid 250 dollars. And fixed most of the instruments.

STEVEN

You left with one violin under your arm.

BEETHOVEN

A broken neck on a violin. I had to get home right away.

STEVEN

He left me with the rest to deal with.

BEETHOVEN

I fixed most of them.

TONI

It's time to take a walk Ludwig.

Steven takes work with him and
exits to an office room.

Ludwig stares out on the vista.
Eroica pipes in of the Scherzo.

BEETHOVEN

Did you tell your mother I loved you?

TONI

You didn't tell me you loved me. I prayed to God about you.

BEETHOVEN

Why doesn't He exist for me?

Steven enters with files..

STEVEN

Who doesn't exist?

TONI

God doesn't exist for him.

STEVEN

Well he doesn't exist for everybody. I'm going to make you
a special tea mixed by that woman in West Stockbridge.
She's a good witch. And you know what else I bought? What
did she call you? She referred to you as a hypochondriac
cause you have so many things wrong with you but said you
need to change your minerals. She wants to meet you...
Antonia, she said you drink too much and that's why you
suffer from mood temperatures.

TONI

Temperatures?

STEVEN

She's very connected to cosmic influences.

BEETHOVEN

My future is in good hands.

ACT 4

Saturday morning, the day of the concert.

Beethoven, in a rock and roll long tailed robe, pops into his living room filled with wild energy. He walks around picking up glasses and plates and brings them to the kitchen.

Eroica's finale is piped in as the fourth Act begins.

Choreographed movement, as uninhibited Beethoven, dances to Mother Earth.

BEETHOVEN

I will be immortal! Oh! Look at the day. You've obliged. You gave me a blue sky! The lawn will be covered in sunglasses and hats. And talk with programs folded like fans. Explaining to each other how much they all know about me. How people study each other. Humanologists. They study me? (Imitative.) Ludwig is with blah- bla blah at the conservatory of blah bla bla. Very impressive. I had a god son who attended. Oh did you know his grandfather was the eminent Ludwig Von Beethoven. That is where his talent comes from. Oh his father was a drunk and his mother died to young. blah bla.

Steven and Toni walk into the house. They are dressed formerly for the concert.

TONI

My darling! We're here. You rumpled thing. Did you have a good night. I feel like a buttercup! It's already started! The phone calls late last night. A job offer! Interviews. Record deals! I got a call from the local news asking me to explain Eroica...

BEETHOVEN

Before the concert? no Toni I cannot. Steven explain it to her.

STEVEN

Good morning Maestro. We don't see anyone before the concert. Too brisk. My finger tips are numb.

BEETHOVEN

Great rehearsal. Fantastic.

STEVEN

In what way? Well I would say fun. Especially the staccato in Mozart's Great mass.

BEETHOVEN

I laughed without beer.

STEVEN

Blue sky. Like you ordered.

BEETHOVEN

Order bacon, sausage, eggs...

STEVEN

I went vegetarian last night.

BEETHOVEN

Ah so you're competing for Valery.

STEVEN

Why don't you invite her to sit on stage with us?

TONI

Who?

STEVEN

His new love, Valery.

Eroica stops.

TONI

Yes that little girl. You should invite her to sit on your lap as you conduct! You must focus on the more important people who can improve your life. A position is being made available to you. The Director of a new concert hall...

STEVEN

A position?

TONI

Yes. Steady income Ludwig.

STEVEN

A place of permanence?

BEETHOVEN

A director of what concert hall?

TONI

Steady income.

BEETHOVEN

What would that do Steven?

STEVEN

I suppose I could audition...

BEETHOVEN

We don't know their standards?

STEVEN

A consideration but not intimidating.

BEETHOVEN

If I go in every day...to a job? You said it's new? A new manufacturing of a concert hall? It might have sound problems. Is there a ... musical program?

TONI

There might be other composers.

BEETHOVEN

What? Should I take this Steven? I mean it's a little premature. Can I still compose?

STEVEN

Who's going to stop you from composing? It might be just what you're looking for... stability.

TONI

There's no decision to make. You have to take it. I don't understand?

BEETHOVEN

I accept the offer. If they want me to conduct some one else's notes...would they ask me to conduct someone I don't approve of?

TONI

It's in Vienna.

BEETHOVEN

Wow. Well. That's a surprise. I have to sit down for that one. I thought they were only looking for Mozart proteges in Vienna. They want me?

TONI

They want to meet you. Before the concert.

BEETHOVEN

I'm interviewing today? Between A flat and F sharp? Or how about stop the tympani I need to answer a question.

TONI

It'll take two seconds.

BEETHOVEN

Before the concert? I have a duet with Steven.

TONI

Ludwig we can't put a piano on the lawn. They laughed at me.

BEETHOVEN

Really.

TONI

You can play from the stage...There's no room for the piano on the grass...

BEETHOVEN

I want to be milling. Steven will play violin and I'll play... oboe.

STEVEN

Oboe?

BEETHOVEN

I have an oboe. Then we can walk around. No, not oboe. I can't play oboe. I'll play violin with you.

STEVEN

Oh no. You're not going to play that cheap violin from the schoolyard. I think it's a good idea we play. From the stage. Play the piano on stage.

BEETHOVEN

No! We're going to come out and play the violins and mill around. And wink at girls. Tell your Viennese contingency that instead of talking to me they should be listening for my answer on the violin.

STEVEN

I wish I had slept at the concert hall. Can you begin your ablutions? You need to shave.

BEETHOVEN

Practice "The Triple Concerto". Here. Take your violin and practice.

STEVEN

All right!

BEETHOVEN

Play it to the forest. Maybe they'll throw pine cones at you too.

Steven takes his violin and exits
with the music sheets through the
French doors.

BEETHOVEN

The pale blue dress.

TONI

Yes.

BEETHOVEN

I love this dress. I can see you out of the corner of my eye, when I conduct.

TONI

How?

BEETHOVEN

It shimmers. Like stars.

TONI

It's not possible you can see anything but your music. Do you know how you conduct? Like fleas have attacked you.

Music pipes in to continue the 4th movement of Eroica.

BEETHOVEN

Maybe they have?

Beethoven conducts. He does not hear her.

TONI

And you're Don Quixote fighting windmills? How can you see me?

Beethoven leads her downstage.

BEETHOVEN

Come here. You see the thin, shimmery line of the lake? It's beyond the forest. Through the woods. Past hills, and wild flowers but there it is the line that tells me there is a bigger lake. It's you in the dress. I see it through the music, instruments, stage lights and my childish thoughts. I always see you.

Steven enters from the French doors.

STEVEN

I called the oboist and she's willing to walk around with us playing "The Triple Concerto". She needs to hear it again before we perform.

BEETHOVEN

I'll play the violin?

STEVEN

What about all the notes you wanted to pass out to ...

BEETHOVEN

Oh yes, I did want to meet with the cellists...

STEVEN

Toni can you take Ludwig to Tanglewood?

TONI

My pleasure...

STEVEN

Where's the music? We've got to move it along now.

Beethoven looks for the music
sheet for the oboist.

Valery enters living room from the
bedroom entrance. She is dressed
in left over Beethoven clothes.

Simultaneously, Steven and Toni
jump out of their skins.

VALERY

Oh, I thought you were talking to yourself.

TONI

No, we're the next group, to honor our Emperor.

BEETHOVEN

Emperor!

TONI

Yes great conquerer of the hearts. I should have known! The
look on your face! I have an errand to do. I'll drive to
the oboist now. give me her music. Can you give it to me
Ludwig?

BEETHOVEN

Don't leave. Steven you take it.

TONI

I want to go. Give me the music.

BEETHOVEN

Don't leave.

STEVEN

You are taking Maestro to Tanglewood.

BEETHOVEN

We're engaged!

TONI

Oh really?

Toni grabs the music out of
Beethoven's hands and exits.

STEVEN

Congratulations, Ludwig. You've done it again.

Valery goes over to Ludwig and
kisses him for the morning hello.

Eroica continues as they both look
in love with each other.

Valery signals for coffee.

STEVEN

Coffee for two! Help yourself.

VALERY

Hey, thanks. (A wave to Steven.) Finally, got a signal back
in the last bedroom. Jimmy called. we're working today.
Today's Saturday, right?

Valery walks into the kitchen area
and finds a coffee cup, etc.

BEETHOVEN

Lovely.

STEVEN

Yes, but why did you not say lovely, was in the backroom?

BEETHOVEN

We've only mounted the arpeggio.

STEVEN

Don't talk until you've reached diminuendo. I like to come
in when this ends.

BEETHOVEN

We're engaged. There's no ending. She loves me. We confessed everything to each other and she accepts me.

VALERY

My Teddy bear.

BEETHOVEN

She knows everything. She's a child and I'm going to educate...

Valery snorts. She takes out a mirror, her hair stuff from the bag and uses a brush.

VALERY

Oh yeah? You're going to teach me? I think I taught you.

STEVEN

What would you mentor her in? She seems unmentor-ble.

BEETHOVEN

Singing. She's a great singer.

STEVEN

Ah. So you love music too. Music is what you live for just like me and Ludwig. Let's audition you right now.

VALERY

I'm not going to sing.

BEETHOVEN

(Sings.)

Oh Eroica, Eroica, I launch your mighty ship. Plunge into the waters. To the bow! I bow. I bow) To your perfection. bow for me.

STEVEN

Don't forget your vest. You wore it last week and never returned it to the suit.

Ludwig is obedient and a little gleeful. He is about to exit to dress.

BEETHOVEN

A smooth road has nothing to offer.

STEVEN

I said that.

BEETHOVEN

Oh thank goodness. I thought I made it up.

Beethoven exits.

Valery and Steven

STEVEN

How old are you?

VALERY

That's not polite.

STEVEN

I think you're too young.

VALERY

The women in my family have secret beauty methods to keep them young looking.

STEVEN

Oh really? You could bottle it.

VALERY

I love his music. It makes me cry. How does he do that?

STEVEN

Are you being picked up soon?

VALERY

Yeah. Yeah. He is great. Ludwig thinks I'm a true artist. He got something out of me. He has beauty, real beauty like me but with music. We have our connection. I loved climbing trees. And the stars. We talked all night.

STEVEN

(He shouts down the hallway.)

Ludwig! Do you need help buttoning your shirt?

Ludwig proudly dressed to
perfection comes out like a Rock
Prince.

VALERY

Oh boy, you look good.

STEVEN

Not bad. Not bad. You're well?

BEETHOVEN

I feel terrific.

Toni returns.

TONI

She knew the music very well but was insecure with Ludwig
playing next to her. The oboists house isn't far. Just over
the hill. Everything's fine. She looked at the music and
said thank you. Is there water?

Toni walks to the kitchen.

Eroica's finale with emphasis on
cellos is piped in.

A bang on the door. Valery jumps
up to open the door.

BEETHOVEN

Don't go out.

VALERY

It's Jimmy.

BEETHOVEN

Let him come in.

TONI

Why are we having more visitors?

STEVEN

She's being picked up.

TONI

Where are you're clothes?

VALERY

I put them in the laundry.

BEETHOVEN

I told her to. Your maids will wash them.

TONI

It's their privilege.

STEVEN

It was so nice to meet you Valery.

VALERY

I'm going to the concert.

Off stage Jimmy is knocking
loudly.

BEETHOVEN

Come in!

(Talking only to Steven.)

This is the 4th symphony.

Jimmy, carefully, walks in.
Beethoven is conducting the finale
of Eroica.

BEETHOVEN

Valery said yes to my proposal.

JIMMY

Really? She accepted? You two getting married?

VALERY

No. He likes to kid.

JIMMY

What is this? What is this that you're doing?

VALERY

No, I'm in the middle of something here. This is not just
having fun.

BEETHOVEN

It's more than just a passing fancy?

JIMMY

Last day at the barn. I sold it to the school. They were looking for a community place and this barn would be great for them.

VALERY

He's nicer than you.

She gathers her bags.

JIMMY

Her team is waiting...

VALERY

Oh Louie. I gotta go. I want to go to his concert.

JIMMY

Oh yeah?

VALERY

What time are we going to be done today?

JIMMY

When the sun goes down.

VALERY

That could be hours.

Both Toni and Steven respond.

STEVEN AND TONI

Maestro.

VALERY

I want to make a speech.

BEETHOVEN

Bravo my lady!

TONI

Not now.

VALERY

Artists need to explore for the truth.

STEVEN

And you've only started.

BEETHOVEN

Tonight my pet. Tonight you'll live with me.

JIMMY

We're all artists here.

STEVEN

Do you have a car?

JIMMY

I got a great car. It has two seats. Valery likes the ride. I'll be outside.

Jimmy exits.

VALERY

Yeah, it's nice.

Music pipes in of the Eroica
Finale. Beethoven focus's on his
music.

Valery goes to kiss Ludwig.

VALERY

I wonder who's going to be more famous? You or me?

BEETHOVEN

Me.

VALERY

Oh yeah? Then I better be as good as you today.

BEETHOVEN

Challenge taken.

Beethoven kisses Valery farewell.

VALERY

I'm going to win. But you're cute, Louie.

Beethoven exits to the bedroom.

Steven locks the entrance door. He collapses just a bit.

STEVEN

He's gone. I'll wait a few minutes. Just to make sure that horrid creature does not return.

Steven posts himself close to the door. Toni walks over to the window and lights a cigarette.

STEVEN

(Surprised.)

You don't smoke.

TONI

May I please have one vice.

The finale of Eroica is piped in.

Toni and Steven listen to Eroica with their own conducting and improvisational gestures.

Beethoven enters in full dress.

BEETHOVEN

Steven I would like to be alone with Antonia. I'll meet you at Tanglewood.

STEVEN

Maestro!

Steven gives him a hearty pat.

BEETHOVEN

Pick up the oboist. If she needs a ride? And any one else? Antonia and I will drive together.

They hug and Steven exits.

Toni fixes his shirt.

BEETHOVEN

Alone at last.

TONI

You look like a composer!

BEETHOVEN

I am!

TONI

All your posters. I see your face every where.

BEETHOVEN

You did it!

TONI

The lawn is filled to capacity. I think its a great idea!
You and Steven milling around.

BEETHOVEN

Did you tell the Viennese that I'm playing.

TONI

Yes! They're completely insane with the idea. They already
call you brilliant and humble.

BEETHOVEN

Ha! Humble? Do they think I'm beautiful?

TONI

Yes, you are.

BEETHOVEN

Yes I am!

He sits down and despair fills his
face.

TONI

My God! What is it? I got a shiver.

BEETHOVEN

Will you forgive me? I'm sick.

The music pipes in to continue the
4th movement.

TONI

I have a higher love for you. It's like of a God.

BEETHOVEN

Antonia please. I'm so shallow in front of you.

TONI

Not of a mortal. Immortal...never stops existing...

BEETHOVEN

I will shut down.

TONI

Not yet? How could you shut down? You do more and more. We
can hardly keep up with you. If anything I wish you would
slow down a little bit.

BEETHOVEN

So you forgive me.

TONI

I do. There's so little room for anything but
forgiveness... I'm jealous of Steven. He lives in music
too.

BEETHOVEN

In the finale of Eroica, allegro molto, the musical theme
refers back to the beginning. Repeating the first movement.
Immortality is to begin again. But with new generations of
people. And the old ones, like me, will crumble back into
the earth.

TONI

Old man my dear. You've had several women in your bed since
we moved up here!

BEETHOVEN

I am a deaf man. I will be a deaf composer.

TONI

Deaf to the world?

BEETHOVEN

The world will be silent. Silence of Beethoven.

TONI

What are you talking about? Has...? that is what has turned your behavior into such irrational...

BEETHOVEN

I finally said it.

TONI

You finally said what? This is true? Is that why you're not listening? This is the first I...? I don't remember you going to doctors?

BEETHOVEN

I'm a fake...

TONI

What part of fake is this? You hear me now. Listen whatever you're going through there's hope. I believe in it. Have you given up hope?

BEETHOVEN

No!

TONI

All right! Then we'll see people. We'll see everyone! There's always some one who knows how to fix things.

BEETHOVEN

It's a progressive hearing loss.

TONI

Okay progressive. It means it's not there yet.

TONI

You hear me now.

BEETHOVEN

Yes.

TONI

Then that's it! I will take nothing else. Ludwig listen to me. I have access to the best...

BEETHOVEN

Antonia you know everyone.

TONI

Does Steven know?

BEETHOVEN

He says its a cold. He gave me herbs and actually I do feel better.

TONI

It can be helped. Oh Ludwig take a look at yourself. You're magnificent. Its the stress. Symphony stress. Causes all kinds of mental maladies.

BEETHOVEN

Mental maladies? I sort of see it as the cruelest joke ever put upon except for Job.

He breaks down and cries.

TONI

Valery loves you. I love you. Your mother loved you. Better?

BEETHOVEN

Yes.

TONI

Come take a look.

Geese honking as they fly across.

BEETHOVEN

I don't hear the geese. I know they're calling out. They have to. Honk for the formation. Beaks move. I can't hear the note. I know it. C flat. Unpleasant...

TONI

Very unpleasant. Not worth hearing...

BEETHOVEN

I have to think like a deaf man. And store my sounds in a place I can always recall.

TONI

I'm begging you not to give in to this right now...I'm positive we will find a remedy and cure!

BEETHOVEN

No, no don't take away it's irony? I couldn't be more filled with notes, sounds, brooks, tapping on flat rocks, wind whirling. I am filled with sound. Ask Steven. I make him crazy. Deafness will not cut me off from my music. That's the joke oh Him! Deafness will not cut me off. It's there. In my head. Given to me by the devil, my father who tortured my body into this condition. He taught me how to memorize a symphony. I could write all the notes, laying on the floor of the closet, holding my hand to the pain in my ear... after his beatings... It's so awful to think that my destiny is in direct link to his cruelties.

TONI

Everything is as it should be. Ludwig, past. He's gone now. Let his spirit rest. You don't need to be in a closet room any more. You're in a house. A big beautiful open vista and you have free will to compose.

BEETHOVEN

Free will?

TONI

Yes, you write only as Beethoven.

BEETHOVEN

It is only me?

TONI

Yes, you're voice.

BEETHOVEN

I'm not a fraud?

TONI

We'll see today.

Beethoven laughs.

BEETHOVEN

Oh, Toni, I love you madly.

He kisses her fondly before
getting his violin.

BEETHOVEN

Oh my sweet, unattended, violin. At last, you'll get to perform. I've polished your wood for this day. The triplet will be provocative. Don't you think?

TONI

You said people you would be milling.

BEETHOVEN

Afterwards, I'll leap onto the stage. And jump on the piano bench.

TONI

Oh my God...No you won't

BEETHOVEN

Oh come'on! I'm in great shape. I can do it! I'm telling you. I've been hiking everyday.

TONI

If I go on stage and introduce you, will you promise me, you won't try acrobatics, Maestro?

BEETHOVEN

You'll announce me from the stage. I'll be recognized. You said my posters are everywhere. Girls could recognize me. I'll sign some autographs. I can't stop playing.

TONI

When I announce, Ludwig Von Beethoven with his 3rd symphony, Eroica!

BEETHOVEN

Then I'll walk up on stage. Not say a word. Pick up the baton, and signal.

They exit together, arm in arm.
Eroica Pipes in.

THE END

