

"YES, INDEED!"

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FADE IN:

EXT. NORTH FAIRFAX AVENUE - DAY

SUPER: LOS ANGELES, CA, 9-4-1989

Los Angeles has yet to slow down during this lunch hour on a day that features a sunny, healthy blue sky.

EXT. MIKE'S DELI - DAY

This famed Fairfax-area eatery is known for its candy-striped awnings and for a garishly-painted sign on one of the front windows: "OPEN 24 HOURS."

INT. MIKE'S DELI DINING ROOM - DAY

Mike's Deli looks like an inexpensive place to eat. Its interior design weds 1930s Art Deco to 1980s fast food.

The restaurant sports a tables-and-booths setup; casually-dressed CUSTOMERS fill up most of the seats.

MARGARET ALEXANDER (25, determined; squeaky-voiced) and her husband RAY KEITHLEY (33, jovial; Texas twang) sit face-to-face in one of the booths.

Margaret takes a sip from her water glass.

MARGARET

I used to swim in better-tasting water.

Ray takes a sip out of his water glass...and looks satisfied.

RAY

How's it goin' findin' work, Margie?

MARGARET

It's easier to tear down the Watts Tower one piece at a time.

Margaret drinks out of her glass again.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Too hot today...anything rattling around inside that fertile mind of yours?

RAY

Writer's wall.

Tuxedo-clad HEATHER LOOKABAUGH (22), a food server here, hurries over to Margaret's and Ray's booth.

MARGARET
You mean writer's block.

Heather removes a notepad from her suit pocket.

RAY
Not fer me.

HEATHER
Are you two ready now?

Ray and Margaret nod while Heather does a doubletake.

HEATHER (CONT'D)
Wait a minute! It's true!

MARGARET
What?

HEATHER
It's really true!

MARGARET, RAY
WHAT?

HEATHER
Margaret...you really did break up
with Paul Hinton!

Heather rests a hand on Margaret's shoulder.

HEATHER (CONT'D)
What happened?

MARGARET
Meet my husband, Ray Keithley. Ray,
meet--

Ray shakes Heather's hand with a grip that makes her wince.

HEATHER
Heather.

Ray does a doubletake of his own while Heather removes a pencil from her hair.

RAY

Heather Lookabaugh...weren't you on that sitcom a few years ago..."Three Families in th' Same House?"

MARGARET

(to Ray)

Heather's trying to take our order.

(to Heather)

I'll have a Reuben with sauerkraut and a salad and some milk...and some French dressing.

RAY

(to Heather)

Yeah, you fell in love with a different guy each week--

MARGARET

Do you have any crow for my husband?

Heather shakes her head "no."

RAY

Ah'll have the same thang as Margie...'cept Ah'll have a Co-Cola.

Heather writes all this down on her notepad.

HEATHER

Ray, I didn't fall in love with a different guy each week. It was every other week.

Heather walks away from the booth...only to stop and look at Margaret.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

Margaret...when're you gonna do another series? You were so great on "The Homesteaders."

Margaret and Heather smile.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

Like the time you wrestled a bear. I would've turned and ran!

A CUSTOMER at another booth whistles in a hostile way at Heather...who runs in response.

HEATHER (CONT'D)
 BE RIGHT THERE!
 (to Margaret and Ray)
 And I'll be back with your food!

Ray takes another sip from his water glass.

RAY
 Margie...what did you take at UCLA?

MARGARET
 Music. Remember?

RAY
 Ever thought 'bout gittin' into it?
 Like Lisa Hartman and Lynda Carter
 and Cheryl Ladd and--

MARGARET
 I can't sing worth beans, Ray.

RAY
 You don't have to sang! 'Member
 when we got married...and we had
 the banquet at that theater in
 Trenton, New Jersey, and you played
 that big ol' pipe organ?

Margaret's mouth flies open.

MARGARET
 That was the Trenton War Memorial
 Auditorium.

RAY
 And you got your left shoe caught
 in th' pedals?

MARGARET
 But I kept right on playing.

RAY
 You shore did.
 (downs all his water)
 Ah'll never forget what you did to
 "St. Louis Blues."

MARGARET
 Next you'll tell me that's why the
 Cardinals football team moved to
 Phoenix.

Ray chuckles.

EXT. MIKE'S DELI - DAY

A motorcycle pulls into the already-crowded parking lot.

JANET O'KEEFFE (28, energetic, gentle, sexy; the driver) and hubby BRUCE THOMPSON (26, insecure; the passenger) jump off the motorbike. Both take off their helmets on the way to Mike's.

BRUCE

Is this place as good as you keep telling me it is?

JANET

You'll never know unless you walk in there with me.

Janet grabs the front door and gestures Bruce inside the restaurant. Bruce hesitates a bit before he enters the eatery at last.

INT. MIKE'S DELI DINING ROOM - DAY

Janet and Bruce walk inside...only to find Mike's Deli to be a sea of humanity.

BRUCE

Janet, let's go home. Somebody'll have to die before we get seated.

Janet looks surprised.

Margaret and Ray finally receive their food from Heather.

RAY

Margie, you can play any instrument that ain't tied down.

(bites into sandwich)

You know...y'oughta start your own band.

Margaret shrugs.

HEATHER

Everything okay?

Ray and Margaret gesture their approval. As the latter digs into her salad, Heather leaves the booth.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

(along the way)

HEATHER (CONT'D)

I'll never trust those supermarket tabloids...I mean birdcage liners ever again.

Janet and Bruce join Margaret and Ray at the latter couple's booth; Janet sits next to Margaret while Bruce moves next to Ray.

Ray and Margaret chow down...until Janet tickles Margaret's shoulders.

MARGARET

Janet O'Keefe!

Margaret pushes her food away.

JANET

See, Bruce, we found a table.
(to Margaret)
I understand you got married, too.

Janet stops tickling Margaret.

MARGARET

Too?

JANET

Bruce, meet Margaret Alexander.
Margaret, meet Bruce Thompson, my husband.

Bruce and Margaret shake hands; Bruce shakes hands with Ray.

RAY

(to Bruce and Janet)
And Ah'm Ray Keithley, Margie's significant other.

Bruce and Ray continue their handshake; it ends when Bruce winces from Ray's grip.

RAY (CONT'D)

Awraht...husband.

JANET

Margaret, what're you doing with yourself?

MAIN TITLES APPEAR OVER ACTION.

MARGARET

Ray's trying to get me to pull a George Segal and start my own band.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

I already told him I can't sing
worth beans.

Margaret takes a bite of her Reuben.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

What are you doing, Jan?

JANET

Bruce and I are trying out for
every part we can. And going to all
the acting classes we can.

MARGARET

Acting classes? WHY?

Heather, notepad in hand as before, returns to Margaret's and
Ray's booth.

HEATHER

(to Margaret and Ray)

I see you've got some company.

RAY

Janet and Bruce are takin' actin'
classes. Why would somebody who had
a top-rated show like "The Jennings
Family" need actin' classes?

Heather shrugs before she turns to Bruce and Janet.

HEATHER

What can I get you two today?

RAY

Git 'em a TV show to match "The
Jennings Family."

(taking a swig of pop)

Mah favorite episode was the one
where Janet filled in for her
brother in his swing band--

Bruce looks lost.

BRUCE

Jan...you didn't tell me.

JANET

That's because you never watched
"The Jennings Family."

Now Bruce shrugs.

EXT. MARGARET'S AND RAY'S HOUSE, BURBANK, CA - DAY

This is a sprawling residence in the San Fernando Valley; Margaret's and Ray's cars (hers is a 1984 Chrysler station wagon) and Janet's motorcycle rest in front of the house.

INT. MARGARET'S AND RAY'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

This larger-than-usual living room seems cozy...due to the presence of as much furniture as possible (especially a grand piano in the middle of the room).

Two sofas take up one corner of the room; Bruce, Janet, Margaret, and Ray sit on those two sofas.

MARGARET

Ray's right.

(getting up)

Janet, you did "The Jennings Family."

Janet nods.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

How do you feel about helping me start a swing band?

Bruce and Janet look at each other in disbelief. Then Janet stares at Margaret in disbelief.

JANET

Did you know the Twentieth Century is almost over? We're heading for the last decade!

MARGARET

Yeah, but they still play swing.

(walking around)

You went out for band in high school, didn't you?

Janet's look of disbelief continues in spite of her nod.

BRUCE

Janet...you didn't tell me!

MARGARET

It was in "Us" magazine!

(walks over to Janet)

They taught you how to play swing in high school, didn't they?

Ray enjoys the show Margaret puts on.

JANET

Well, yes, but...who listens to swing anymore? People old enough to be in retirement homes!

MARGARET

Jan, people old enough to be in retirement homes are running the companies whose products are advertised on TV to the tune of...Prince rejects.

Margaret's remark wrings laughter out of Ray and Bruce...and a titter from Janet.

RAY

That song they use in that spark plug commercial ain't no Prince reject.

(singing)

WOW! Ah feel good!

Ray rises and tries to shimmy like one of those spark plugs. Result: Margaret and Janet join Bruce in strong laughter.

While Ray sits back down, Margaret descends on one knee and caresses one of Janet's knees.

MARGARET

I'm tired of being unemployed, and I know you are, too.

Janet nods.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

And if George Segal can have a band to fall back on, why can't a couple of former child TV stars like us?

JANET

(slowly nodding)

Oh, I'll do it.

Margaret rises and hugs Janet...triggering applause from Ray and Bruce.

Janet turns the affair into a double embrace.

JANET (CONT'D)

But where are we gonna get people?

MARGARET

We'll start searching tonight!

JANET

Fine...but I don't want to play with people who think the good old days were when cars didn't have heaters.

Janet and Margaret break their hug.

JANET (CONT'D)

Reminds me of "The Jennings Family."

Bruce and Margaret stare Janet down.

JANET (CONT'D)

Just kidding.

Margaret and Bruce offer some forced chuckles.

EXT. STONE CANYON HOTEL, LOS ANGELES, CA - NIGHT

Gardens, trees, and flowers seclude this Bel Air landmark...which features a creek where SWANS play.

INT. STONE CANYON LOUNGE - NIGHT

Janet and Margaret walk into a strong Old World atmosphere.

MARGARET

I usually don't go to these kinds of places, Janet.

JANET

I know you don't drink. But we're not here to drink.

Margaret and Janet bypass the bar and head for the middle of the lounge, where they find a series of tables...some for twosomes, others for foursomes.

VERY FEW PEOPLE (most in their 50s) sit here at the lounge.

Margaret and Janet find an empty table and sit down at it.

JULIA LEE MERRIWEATHER (20, exuberant, Black) plays some blues riffs on an 1890-1929 upright piano that's on a platform that hugs one corner of the stage. The piano's hammers are exposed.

JULIA

(into her mike)

I hope you'll like this next one I'd like to do for you.

Julia launches into something downright lowdown.

JULIA (CONT'D)

I found an album that's got a song
by Ma Rainey on it...you might like
it, but then, well...anyway, I had
a tough time learning the words.

Janet and Margaret look attentive.

JULIA (CONT'D)

Anyway, here it is.

(singing)

*I want all you women to listen to
me./Don't trust your man no further
than your eyes will see.*

Some of the customers groan, but a larger number cheer.

JULIA (CONT'D)

*I caught him behind with my best
friend,/But there's some bad comin'
in the end./Trust no man./Trust no
man no further than your eyes could
see./I said, "Trust no man no
further than your eyes can see."*

In between "Trust No Man's" first verse and the bridge, Julia pounds the ivories as hard as she can.

JULIA (CONT'D)

*It's better that he loves you as
far as he'll do./Guard your man or
he'll turn his back on you./I said,
"Trust no man no further than your
eyes can see."*

Julia comes up with a raunchy, sixteen-bar piano solo.

Meanwhile, Janet and Margaret converse.

MARGARET

Did George Segal audition any women
for his band?

JANET

I don't know, Margaret. Did he?
He's your idol.

MARGARET

All I know is: I'm...I mean
we're...we're going to.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

And our band's gonna blow people's
socks off. Or wigs off.

A MAN (40s) stumbles toward Janet's and Margaret's table.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

(to Janet)

When I was in high school, there
was this band called Maiden Voyage.
It was a swing band, and it
appeared on "The Tonight Show" one
evening--

The man tries to sit next to Margaret and Janet.

MAN

Shay...didn't you...didn't you used
to...didn't you used to be...uh...

Margaret and Janet look annoyed as they smell his breath.

JANET

I still am Janet O'Keefe, and my
friend here still is Margaret
Alexander.

Onstage, Julia ends her instrumental break and resumes
doubling on tonsils.

JULIA

*Just keep your daddy with a long-
handle spoon./He's got to love you
morning, night, and noon.*

While Julia sings and plays, Margaret gestures Janet into
joining her at another table.

MAN

(trying to stand up)

I just...wa-wanted to get
your...your...

JULIA

*Sometimes your heart will ache and
fold up./That's why ain't no daddy
good enough to love./Trust no man.*

Janet and Margaret find a table closer to the piano when
Julia launches a recitation.

JULIA (CONT'D)

*Say, everybody! Take my advice!
Don't trust no man. I mean not even
your own man.*

JULIA (CONT'D)

All right now, you'd best believe it. Just don't trust nobody. See why he got me, don't you? He sure will leave you.

The man sits back down while Julia resumes her vocal.

JULIA (CONT'D)

Trust no man./Trust no man no further than your eyes could see./Aw, trust no man no further than your eyes can see.

Margaret and Janet concentrate intently on Julia's playing and singing.

JULIA (CONT'D)

He'll stay with you in the winter,/Find some money in the snow;/Out in the summer, you'll find your keys'll be gone./I said, "Trust no man no further than your eyes can see."

While Julia pounds out an ending for "Trust No Man," the man falls asleep at Margaret's and Janet's previous table.

The two ex-child TV stars observe this drunken man.

MARGARET

He would've thrown up on our autographs, anyway.

At the end of "Trust No Man," Janet and Margaret join in the strong applause.

Once the applause dies down, Julia addresses the audience.

JULIA

Ladies and gentlemen, we're gonna take a little break. Back with more in five minutes.

Julia bats out an arpeggio, leaves the piano, and walks toward the bar.

Margaret and Janet watch Julia head for the bar. They follow her there.

MARGARET

(eyeballing Janet)
Remember: If the bartender asks,
we're not drinking.
(to Julia)

MARGARET (CONT'D)

This won't take but a couple of minutes!

Before she can reach the bar, Julia stops in her tracks...and turns her back to the bar.

JULIA

(pointing at Margaret)

You played on "The Homesteaders."

Julia looks awestruck.

JULIA (CONT'D)

Did you really wrestle a bear?

MARGARET

(nodding)

It wasn't a Chicago Bear, I'll tell you that.

Janet gestures Julia and Margaret away from the bar area...and back to that table over by the piano.

Along the way, the conversation continues.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

(shows Julia scarred arm)

I've got the scars to prove it.

JULIA

(to Janet)

And you did "The Jennings Family."

(nodding)

You really surprised me when you punched out that drunken GI who made a pass at you.

JANET

Want to see my fingernails?

Julia nods as Janet gleefully displays her fingernails.

JULIA

(shaking Janet's hand)

My name's Julia Lee Merriweather. I've been singing and tickling the ivories since 1983.

(shakes Margaret's hand)

Actually, I've been doing it here since '83...I started taking piano lessons when I was five.

The three women reach Margaret's and Janet's table, where all three sit down in near unison.

MARGARET

Julia...Janet and I are starting a swing band.

JULIA

Good luck, you two...these days, all you need is an electronic keyboard and you can be your own swing band.

JANET

We heard you playing...and singing...and we thought you'd make a great addition to our band.

Julia looks interested.

JULIA

Who else is in it?

MARGARET

Right now, it's...Janet and me.

JANET

(hugging Margaret)

We both play all the instruments.

Julia's mouth flies open.

JULIA

How'd you...how'd you two find the time?

MARGARET

After "Homesteaders" went off, I studied music at UCLA.

JANET

I went to UCLA, too.

JULIA

How'd it feel to have the same classes?

JANET

Oh, Julia, I took political science there...I took music on my own, 'cause I thought it would help my acting career.

Julia slowly nods.

MARGARET

(to Julia)

We'll keep you posted on when we'll really get started on the band.

JULIA

Sounds like a good idea, but...I don't think my boss would like that.

The lounge's manager, HOWARD BELTON (50s), looks impatient as he watches Julia, Janet, and Margaret gab.

HOWARD

One minute.

Margaret and Janet scowl at Howard.

Janet pulls out a notepad and a pen.

JANET

Julia...can we at least get your autograph?

A surprised Julia takes the pen and the pad from Janet to sign the autograph as a perplexed Margaret looks on.

EXT. BRUCE'S AND JANET'S HOUSE, BURBANK, CA - DAY

A 1979 Winnebago RV, a 1983 Toyota Corolla, and Janet's motorcycle rest alongside this fairly large house in the San Fernando Valley.

INT. BRUCE'S AND JANET'S BEDROOM - DAY

Bruce and Janet, both in casual clothes, sit on the bed in a room filled with modern, not-so-eclectic furniture.

Janet and Bruce look at scripts.

BRUCE

See if this one's for you.

Bruce grabs a script from off the bed and hands the script to Janet. As she reads it, she looks unimpressed.

JANET

Another horror movie.

Janet tosses that script away and removes another from off the bed.

JANET (CONT'D)
If this one's another horror movie
script, I'll--

BRUCE
How was Girls' Night Out?

Janet looks over the script that's now in her hands while she answers Bruce.

JANET
We're gonna do it again tomorrow
night.

BRUCE
Can I come?

JANET
If you want to...and if you invite
Ray.

Bruce nods in bewilderment.

JANET (CONT'D)
You'd love it. The Stone Canyon
Hotel's got this singer named Julia
Merriweather.

Now Bruce nods listlessly.

JANET (CONT'D)
And she plays the meanest piano in
town.

Bruce's bewilderment returns; this time, Janet puts the script down and looks at him.

JANET (CONT'D)
Would you believe it? Somebody just
sent me a script about a pair of
former child TV stars trying to
start a swing band.

Bruce picks up a script, reads the front page, realizes he's got a horror script in hand, and hands it to Janet.

BRUCE
Here, Jan. Scream.

Janet takes the script from Bruce and hits him with it.

EXT. STONE CANYON HOTEL, LOS ANGELES, CA - NIGHT

The creek isn't as full of SWANS this time...but the parking lot's full.

INT. STONE CANYON LOUNGE - NIGHT

More of a CROWD this time: PEOPLE sit at most of the small tables, and CUSTOMERS line the bar.

Margaret, Janet, Ray, and Bruce sit at one of those small tables next to the piano...where Julia sings and plays Nellie Lutcher's "Hurry On Down," a sprightly, jumping novelty.

Julia adds vocals after her four-bar intro:

JULIA
 (into her mike)
*Aw, hurry on down to my place,
 baby./Ain't nobody home but
 me./Hurry on down to my place,
 baby./I'm as blue as I can be./I
 love you and you love me./Hurry
 through the alley so the neighbors
 can't see.*

Some customers bust out in laughter.

JULIA (CONT'D)
*Hurry on down to my place,
 baby./Ain't nobody home but me.*

The whole crowd warms up to the song.

JULIA (CONT'D)
*You better hurry on down to my
 place, baby./Ain't nobody home but
 me./Hurry on down to my place,
 baby./I'm as blue as I can be.*

Even Howard wears a smile as he watches Julia.

JULIA (CONT'D)
*Mama's gone for the whole long
 day./Just think of it, baby. We'll
 have a long time to play,/If you
 hurry on down./Ain't nobody home
 but me.*

Bruce, Janet, Margaret, and Ray get a special kick out of Julia's number.

JULIA (CONT'D)

Hurry, hurry, hurry, hurry./Ain't nobody home but me./Hurry on down to my place, baby./I'm as blue as I can be./The cuckoo in the clock is going "Tick, tock, tick."/Ow! Come on, honey! Quick! Quick! Quick!

Crowd laughter erupts again.

JULIA (CONT'D)

Hurry on down to my place, baby./Ain't nobody home but me.

Julia beats out a thirty-two-bar instrumental solo that skips, hops, and skitters.

Janet and Bruce watch Julia play while Margaret converses with Ray. (All four drink pop.)

MARGARET

Janet and I are gonna camp right here every night 'til Julia changes her mind.

RAY

Will America be drug-free by then?

MARGARET

I don't know, Ray, but you may have a broken arm by then.

Janet gently grabs Margaret's arm to get the latter woman to dig the music.

SAME SCENE - A BIT LATER

Julia's set is over, and now she sits at the same table as Margaret and Co.

JULIA

Boy, were the tabloids wrong about you and Paul Hinton.

Margaret looks surprised.

RAY

Ah didn't hear this.

Julia touches Margaret on the shoulder.

JULIA
I've got my mind made up on joining
your swing band.

Bruce eyeballs Janet in suspicion...but receives a "don't say it" look from her.

RAY
(to Julia)
Ah'm Margie's husband, Ray
Keithley. And the man next t' Janet
is her husband, Bruce Thompson.

Ray, Julia, and Bruce exchange handshakes.

Margaret sees Howard, who looks at his watch...and now
Margaret looks worried.

JULIA
It's good news, Margaret.

Margaret's worried look brightens.

JULIA (CONT'D)
You've got yourself a piano player.

Janet shakes Julia's hand, then hugs Julia.

A second or two later, Margaret drapes her arms around the
two women.

EXT. PROFESSIONAL TOWERS, LOS ANGELES, CA - DAY

This is a medium-sized, glass-fronted office building close
to downtown.

INT. ROOM 311 AT PROFESSIONAL TOWERS - DAY

Margaret's agent, DAVID STEINMARK (33, a worrier), sits
behind a heavily-cluttered desk in his heavily-cluttered
office when Margaret enters the room.

David gestures Margaret into a seat across from him, but she
shakes her head "no."

MARGARET
I just had to tell you the good
news.

A copy of "Variety" open to the classified section rests on
David's desk. He points to the ad.

DAVID

I know. I saw the ad you and Janet O'Keefe placed yesterday.

MARGARET

Janet and I think we can find enough talent in the Los Angeles area to get a good swing band off the ground.

DAVID

Look, Margie...I can get you a guest shot on "The Arsenio Hall Show." I'll even try to talk him into letting you sit in his seat.

MARGARET

(leaning toward David)

Now I'm serious about this! You haven't gotten me anything since "My Wife, the Jockey." The last two things Ray got me!

DAVID

And you met him in one of them...if you wanna get into music, you oughta try rock. Lot of ex-child stars come back as rock performers.

MARGARET

Not all that many. Besides, I happen to like swing.

DAVID

The kids don't.

Margaret throws her hands up.

DAVID (CONT'D)

The kids control the TV set. Remember? They're the ones who got you on the cover of "Tiger Beat--"

MARGARET

I had to share the cover with ten other actors!

DAVID

The kids made "Homesteaders" a hit, too!

MARGARET

So did a weak time slot on
Wednesday nights!

DAVID

(getting up)

What if you get letters saying
you're a...a...a nerd 'cause you're
not rocking? If you do this,
they'll laugh at you!

MARGARET

Fine! As long as I don't have to
sit around anymore!

David shrinks back into a seated position.

EXT. BRUCE'S AND JANET'S HOUSE, BURBANK, CA - DAY

A few cars cruise along the street.

INT. BRUCE'S AND JANET'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

This sparsely-yet-tastefully furnished space features a big-
screen TV, which is ON.

Janet sits on a sofa and gabs on the phone.

JANET

Margaret...get hold of
yourself...your agent said they'd
laugh at you if you went ahead and
mounted that swing band with me,
huh?

Janet rises from the sofa.

JANET (CONT'D)

When I told mine, she passed
out...we start auditions Tuesday
after next. They'll be where Bruce
and I have our acting classes...

Now Janet walks around while she stays on the phone.

JANET (CONT'D)

Where Bruce and I have our acting
classes...oh, Margie, I want it to
be a surprise...but not to the
people we audition.

EXT. OLYMPIC BLVD. LUTHERAN CHURCH, LOS ANGELES, CA - NIGHT

This post-World War 2 building screams out Mission-style architecture.

INT. OLYMPIC BLVD. LUTHERAN CHURCH FAMILY ROOM - NIGHT

This is actually a fellowship-hall-sized room with a stage in front and lots of rectangular tables on the floor. Up front, four tables form a "U" around which chairs are aligned.

A dumbfounded Margaret, briefcase in tow, sits at a back table, where she watches Janet, Bruce, and TWELVE OTHER PERFORMERS (ages 25-30) participate in an acting class.

The twelve others sit around the "U" and watch Janet and Bruce deliver an AD LIBBED hooker-pimp scene from the stage.

At the end of Bruce's and Janet's improvisation, classmate DWAYNE CARVER jumps out of a seat and climbs upon the stage.

DWAYNE

Great scene!

Dwayne drapes his arms around Bruce and Janet.

DWAYNE (CONT'D)

You know, Janet, I never, ever pictured you for a hooker...but you make a great hooker. And Bruce...you were cookin'.

Janet shrugs while Dwayne turns to the whole student body.

DWAYNE (CONT'D)

Anyway, that's it for tonight. See you next week. Be ready to do scenes from "Green Acres."

Bruce's and Janet's classmates leave the room; some react with AD LIBBED surprise.

While Bruce takes a seat in the "U," Margaret grabs her briefcase and joins Janet onstage.

A drum set, a boombox, an amp, and an electric guitar rest in front of the stage. And a 1900-29 upright piano stands off to the side of the stage.

Janet and Margaret sit at the edge of the stage.

MARGARET
 (opening briefcase)
 Janet, if I'd known we'd be
 auditioning musicians in a church,
 I'd've run off copies of "Mary
 Lou's Mass."

JANET
 That won't work. This is a Lutheran
 church.

Julia sprints into the room and eyes the lone male.

JULIA
 Bruce, are you trying out for the
 band?

BRUCE
 Nah. I'm just helping Margie and
 Jan haul equipment.

Margaret and Janet blow kisses toward Bruce.

JANET, MARGARET
 Thank you, Bruce.

Margaret takes some mimeographed sheet music from her
 briefcase and passes copies out to Janet and Julia.

Meanwhile, SUE ANN RICE (37, bubbly), trumpet case in hand,
 walks into the room...alongside her two sons, JOHN (14) and
 PAUL (11).

JANET
 (to John and Paul)
 Either of you two trying out?

JOHN
 Nah, Janet. We're here to cheer Mom
 on.

PAUL
 Yeah. And we don't even like swing.

John and Paul take seats next to Bruce.

While Janet sets the boombox on one of the "U" tables, Sue
 Ann sets her trumpet case on the same table.

SUE ANN
 (to Janet and Margaret)
 I read about you two in the paper,
 and I heard you were starting a
 swing band.
 (takes trumpet from case)
 I haven't played this horn in a
 band since high school.

Janet and Margaret look alarmed.

SUE ANN (CONT'D)
 But I've been brushing up all week.

MARGARET
 Sue Ann...what kind of music are
 you familiar with?

SUE ANN
 Do you know "Caravan?"

JULIA
 Darn right!

Julia sprints over to the piano and Janet to the drums.
 Meanwhile, Margaret straps on the guitar.

MARGARET
 Sue Ann, you and Julia start it
 out. Janet and I will pick it up
 later.

Margaret goes to the boombox, hits "RECORD," gives Julia and
 Sue Ann a downbeat, and the latter two launch "Caravan,"
 which receives a Latin treatment.

Julia's piano brings Sue Ann's horn into the song with a two-
 bar intro...but Sue Ann sounds nervous after four bars or so.

Still, Janet and Margaret join in nine bars into the number.

INT. OLYMPIC BLVD. LUTHERAN CHURCH BASEMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT

DOROTHY CLUTTERBUCK (29, childlike, curious) and CANDY
 CUMMINGS (30, fun-loving; stylish, quite attractive) run
 toward the Family Room. Both women HEAR THE O.S. MUSIC.

Dorothy totes a clarinet case while Candy carries a tenor
 saxophone case.

DOROTHY
 Oh, boy, I hope they don't kill me
 for being late.

CANDY
 (looks at her watch)
 At least we're fashionably late.

INT. OLYMPIC BLVD. LUTHERAN CHURCH FAMILY ROOM - NIGHT

Dorothy and Candy run inside the room while "Caravan" continues. In fact, thirty-two bars into the tune, Sue Ann cooks at last on her trumpet.

JANET
 You two are late.

DOROTHY
 We're sorry. We got caught in the traffic.

MARGARET
 (nodding)
 If you two know "Caravan," jump right in.

Candy and Dorothy pull out their instruments and jump right in. For the next sixty bars, the two latecomers provide welcome spark to the tune.

Dorothy's and Candy's playing is so torrid that Margaret gives them a sixteen-bar solo each.

At the end of Candy's solo, the music thins down to trumpet and drums for what turn out to be three final bars.

Bruce, Paul, and John applaud wildly when "Caravan" ends.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
 Very good, you guys.
 (to Candy)
 You look familiar. Weren't you on the cover of--

JULIA
 "Jet" magazine.

Janet, Margaret, and Sue Ann look confounded.

CANDY
 And "Teen." And "Vogue." And "Young Miss." AND "Seventeen."

Dorothy turns to Julia, Sue Ann, and the ex-child TV stars.

DOROTHY

She's Candy Cummings...and me, I'm Dorothy Clutterbuck.

JULIA

Candy...Dorothy...I know you know Margaret and Janet from TV. I'm Julia Merriweather, and the woman blowing that trumpet is Sue Ann Rice.

The gang of six break out in handshakes.

JANET

So, Candy...you're a model.

CANDY

I had to do something to pay for this sax, so I started modeling.

(to Dorothy)

How about you?

DOROTHY

Well, after seven years of directing a high school band, I just wanted to be a sideperson again.

JANET

Candy...how'd you get on the cover of "Jet?"

CANDY

You mean you didn't know I was dating Marcus Allen for a while?

Margaret smacks herself on the forehead; Sue Ann, Dorothy, and Janet stare at each other in disbelief; and Candy and Julia just grin.

EXT. EXECUTIVE TOWERS, BURBANK, CA - DAY

This one's a medium-size building in the San Fernando Valley.

INT. ROOM 424 AT EXECUTIVE TOWERS - DAY

INEZ BAUTISTA (40s, gregarious), Janet's agent, works here.

Inez' office has a desk, all right...but she doesn't sit there. Instead, she and Janet sit at a small table on which a boombox rests.

JANET

I've never been this excited about
a job since you got me "The
Jennings Family."

(turns boombox ON)

You've gotta hear this.

Janet's boombox PLAYS BACK a tape of that swingin' session at
Olympic Boulevard Lutheran Church.

Inez grasps one of Janet's hands in a warm, motherly way.

INEZ

What instrument are you playing on
the tape?

JANET

That's me on drums.

Inez and Janet listen on for a bit longer.

JANET (CONT'D)

We have a high school band director
who plays clarinet, a model who
plays tenor sax, and a mother of
two who plays trumpet. And my
partner, Margie Alexander, is on
guitar.

Inez nods.

JANET (CONT'D)

And the woman who plays piano at
the Stone Canyon Hotel, Julia
Merriweather, is with us now, too.

INEZ

Janet...you should've videotaped
this.

JANET

I don't think you'd've wanted to
see the sax player strip down to a
bikini in the middle of "C Jam
Blues."

Janet and Inez listen to a bit of the MUSIC.

INEZ

I thought you loved acting too much
to abandon it.

JANET

Oh, Inez, I do...but I can't help it if people in the industry only wanna remember me as a freckle-faced teenager.

Inez comes up with a knowing smile.

INT. MARGARET'S AND RAY'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Margaret's and Ray's home stereo blasts out SWING MUSIC.

Ray and Margaret themselves sit at one of the two sofas, where she writes something into a notebook.

MARGARET

David and Dorothy both got me to thinking...David said that the kids aren't gonna support a swing band. Dorothy's the band director at Marshall High.

Ray looks attentive.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

And she's gotta try to get her students as interested in Les Brown as they are in Bobby Brown.

Now Ray looks confused.

RAY

Whoa! Slow down, Margie! Last night, you said you wanted t' play that Le Jubile club on La Brea.

MARGARET

Yes, I did. But--

RAY

You gotta be twenty one t' git in!
 (arm around Margaret)
 You still wanna play to th' kids?
 (tickling Margaret)
 And who's Dorothy?

Ray's tickling forces Margaret to stop writing. She puts her notebook and her pen or pencil down.

MARGARET

(breaks from Ray's grasp)
 She's also playing the clarinet in our band!

MARGARET (CONT'D)

(tickling Ray)

You'd know that if you'd come watch us!

Margaret stops tickling Ray...only to see him tickling her. And a second later, husband and wife tickle each other.

INT. BRUCE'S AND JANET'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Bruce and Janet make popcorn; he works with a cooking-oil-filled pan on the range, while she uses a hot-air popper. (Janet puts a bowl underneath the popper's chute.)

JANET

(pouring kernels)

A bit of Lionel Hampton...a dash of Benny Goodman...a touch of Glenn Miller...a pinch of Louis Jord--

BRUCE

Whatcha doing?

JANET

Creating a band book. Each of our candidates is gonna get a song, sight unseen. It'll be something--

An inspired Janet leaves the kitchen.

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

--they've never rehearsed...I'd better get my notebook and write this down!

BRUCE

You better watch this popcorn you started!

Bruce runs to the hot-air popper to keep the newly-popped corn from flying all over the kitchen.

EXT. OLYMPIC BLVD. LUTHERAN CHURCH, LOS ANGELES, CA - NIGHT

On this clear Saturday night, the church seems to be a hubbub of activity.

INT. OLYMPIC BLVD. LUTHERAN CHURCH FAMILY ROOM - NIGHT

With the room set up as before, Margaret, Janet, Sue Ann, Julia, Candy, and Dorothy talk AD LIBBED shop.

It all ends when THERESA LYNE "TERRI" BARNWELL (24, straightforward, Black; slight Boston accent) enters with some of the pieces of her own drum set.

MARGARET

(to Terri)

You didn't have to bring your own drums.

TERRI

Thanks, but if I'm gonna get in an accident, it's gonna be in my car.

Dorothy sprints over to Terri.

DOROTHY

(shaking Terri's hand)

Thank you for coming to Marshall High. I hope they never clean the band room again.

As Dorothy gushes and Terri blushes, BARBARA HANSBERRY (24, Black, eccentric, sexy) and THERESA FIONNUALA "TESS" MCKENNA (21, White, spunky; squeaky Pennsylvania brogue) come in.

Tess and Barbara enter with their own electric guitars and the rest of Terri's drum set.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)

You put on the best drum clinic we've ever had.

Terri grins as Dorothy, Tess, and Barbara help her put that drum set together.

BARBARA

(looking around the room)

Is that all that's trying out?

TESS

Barbara, you know better than that. We've both been in LA long enough to know people here wanna be movie stars or TV stars.

With the drum kit put together, Barbara and Tess plug their guitars into Margaret's amp.

TESS (CONT'D)

They don't wanna be musicians. They can do that anywhere.

Then the twosome join Terri, Janet, Julia, Sue Ann, Candy, Margaret, and Dorothy in tuning up.

Terri's warmup sounds so impressive it forces the other musicians to stop their own tune-up efforts.

When the warmup ends, the other musicians applaud Terri.

MARGARET

Welcome to the band, uh--

TERRI

Theresa Lyne Barnwell. Terri for short.

DOROTHY

Terri teaches music at Cal-Irvine...and she used to play drums on this late-night talk show.

Several mouths drop in awe or in surprise.

CANDY

Janet, she can outplay you.

JANET

Great. Now I know how Lawrence Welk felt after he heard Myron Floren play for the first time.

Tess moves toward Janet.

TESS

My name's Theresa McKenna...but you can call me Tess.

(shaking Janet's hand)

My best friend's

(gestures toward Barbara)

Barbara Hansberry...but you can call her Barbara.

Now Margaret receives a handshake from Tess.

BARBARA

(to Janet and Margaret)

I can't believe you two have given up acting for music.

JANET

You haven't been washed up for six years like I have.

SAME SCENE - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Barbara puts her guitar skills to the test; with Margaret (on rhythm guitar), Janet (trombone), Dorothy (clarinet), Julia (piano), Sue Ann (trumpet), Candy (tenor sax), and Terri (drums) backing her up, it's "Caldonia."

Julia, Margaret, and Terri provide a twelve-bar boogie-beat intro before the brasses and reeds blare their way into the song...and stay for twenty-four bars. Then:

BARBARA
 (singing, too)
*Walkin' with my baby;/She got great
 big feet./She's long, lean, and
 lanky, and/Ain't had nothin' to
 eat./But she's my baby,/And I love
 her just the same./Crazy 'bout that
 woman, 'cause/Caldonia is her name.*

In the chorus, the music drops out...except to punctuate Barbara's yelling:

BARBARA (CONT'D)
*Caldonia!/Caldonia!/What makes your
 big head so hard? Marv!*

Barbara doesn't seem to have trouble with "Caldonia."

SAME SCENE - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Neither does Tess, who helps take the band to the end of a twenty-four bar instrumental break with her guitar work. Afterwards, Tess gives a cornball recitation:

TESS
*You know, my mama told me to leave
 Caldonia alone. That's what she
 told me. No kiddin'. That's what
 she said.*

Barbara tries not to crack up.

TESS (CONT'D)
*She said: "Keep away from that
 woman. She ain't no good. Don't
 bother with her." But Mama didn't
 know what Caldonia was puttin'
 down. So I'm goin' down to
 Caldonia's house and ask her just
 one more time--*

The band plays right through Tess' recitation, only to drop out in the refrain (except to punctuate Tess' pleas).

TESS (CONT'D)
*Caldonia!/CALDONIA!/What makes your
 big head so hard? Marv!*

The musicians take "Caldonia" through ten final bars, then cheer themselves hoarse.

INT. MARGARET'S AND RAY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Margaret and Ray, in their pajamas, sit in the bed.

RAY

Margaret Louise Alexander, git
yourse'f asleep.

MARGARET

(shakes her head "no")
I was wrong about this town. Twelve
million people in the area...and
Janet and I can't even find fifteen
other musicians. Male or female.

RAY

Ah thought you wanted just females.

MARGARET

We've got a pretty good thing
going...seven strong performers. We
have two guitarists of equal
strength and talent.

Ray perks up.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

They're both roommates and grad
students at UCLA. You talk about
bookends!

RAY

Simon and Garfunkel?

MARGARET

Wrong, Tex: Hansberry and McKenna.
And that Terri Barnwell is a
dynamite drummer. I--

Margaret pulls the cover toward Ray and herself.

RAY

Why don't you and Janet do fusion?

MARGARET

We'll have to drop members!
(pointing at Ray)
This band is gonna be swing all the
way!
(folding her arms)

MARGARET(CONT'D)

It's just that a nine-piece swing band isn't really a swing band at all.

EXT. BRUCE'S AND JANET'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A car passes by.

INT. BRUCE'S AND JANET'S BASEMENT - DEN - NIGHT

This is a combination rec room and music room; it features some of Janet's and Bruce's stereo equipment.

It also boasts a tinny-sounding 1900-29 upright piano, where Janet, in her pajamas, plays some Seventies soft rock in the manner of the Forties.

Bruce, in his PJs, jogs his way downstairs and into the room.

BRUCE
Janet, go to bed.

JANET
I'm thinking!

Janet stops in the middle of her song to gesture Bruce into a seat alongside her. When he sits down, Janet picks up her playing where she left off.

JANET (CONT'D)
Phil--

BRUCE
You sure think noisy.

JANET
Thanks...anyway, Phil Spitalny, back in the Thirties, had an all-female orchestra. He auditioned something like one thousand prospects before he found a combination he liked. Maybe--

The phone RINGS...and Janet stops her little concert to answer the phone.

JANET (CONT'D)
(into phone)
Hello?

Bruce strolls over to Janet.

INT. MARGARET'S AND RAY'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Margaret's on the phone while seated at the grand piano.

MARGARET
Hi, Jan. This is Margie.

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

JANET
You couldn't sleep, either?

MARGARET
Spent the last hour thinking...Phil Spitalny had to conduct a nationwide search for talent when he decided to start his "Hour of Charm" orchestra.

JANET
You know...Bruce and I were talking about that.

MARGARET
You've got an RV.

JANET
I haven't taken that thing out since Bruce and I went to San Diego to see the Raiders play the Chargers.

MARGARET
Out of twelve million people around here, we can only get seven people. Doesn't make sense!

As Bruce listens in, he sure looks concerned.

JANET
So what you're saying is...we'll have to see America if we're gonna have a real band. Can you hold on, Margie?

Janet covers up the phone's receiver while she eyes Bruce.

JANET (CONT'D)
Honey..."Star Search" will have to hit the road.

Bruce looks bewildered.

EXT. MARGARET'S AND RAY'S HOUSE - DAY

Notebook and pen or pencil in tow, Margaret stands in front of the house. Ray stands by her side.

RAY

Margie...why don'tcha drive?

MARGARET

This time, I want to live dangerously.

Janet (backpack and all) rides her motorcycle down the street and pulls into Ray's and Margaret's driveway.

Margaret hops on the motorcycle and waves Ray goodbye.

JANET

Put your stuff in the backpack.
Don't want that information flying down the freeway.

Janet takes off her helmet...to put it on Margaret.

Margaret puts her notebook and pen or pencil into Janet's backpack while Ray waves goodbye.

EXT. SAN FERNANDO BOULEVARD - JANET'S MOTORCYCLE - DAY

Janet zips through traffic as carefully as she can...and Margaret hangs on to Janet and to the footrails as tightly as she can.

MARGARET

Anyway, when I told Ray we were gonna conduct a nationwide search for talent, he buried his head in his pillow...then he decided it was time to get his fertile mind going.

JANET

Bruce said he wants to go with me...first thing I'm gonna do is get him a blindfold.

EXT. LOS ANGELES CENTRAL LIBRARY - DAY

This iconic downtown facility is a mixture of Art Deco and international architectural styles.

INT. LIBRARY BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS ROOM - DAY

Piles and piles of telephone directories from major US cities dominate the table Janet and Margaret sit at.

MARGARET

How do you feel about taking a month to finish putting the band together?

Janet nods while she writes down addresses and phone numbers of theaters.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

(observing Janet's list)

No nightclubs? We're gonna try to make our debut in one.

JANET

Do you want our personnel decided by a bunch of people who came to the club not to listen to the music, but to get soaked?

Margaret slowly shakes her head "no."

A WOMAN (60s) prances toward Margaret and Janet and sits down in an empty seat at the table.

WOMAN

Hi, Miss...I mean Ms. Alexander.

Margaret and Janet look up and wave at the woman.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

You were so great on..."The Homesteaders." Tell me: Why aren't you on television anymore?

MARGARET

I'd like to ask the networks that.

And the woman shrugs.

EXT. MIKE'S DELI - DAY

PEOPLE file into the restaurant during this early afternoon.

INT. MIKE'S DELI DINING ROOM - DAY

Margaret, David, Janet, and Inez sit at a booth, where they chow down.

JANET

In a couple of months, Margaret and I will be gone for about a month.

David looks hopeful.

DAVID

You both are filming on location?

MARGARET

We'll be on location, all right.
(attacking her steak)
It's just that we're gonna be--

DAVID

I knew it.
(slams his fork down)
You two are gonna laugh yourselves out of Hollywood with this band thing--

JANET

So...you've been reading Tom Wolfe again?

INEZ

David, maybe you should give Janet and Margaret's big band a chance.

Inez takes a long sip of coffee.

INEZ (CONT'D)

They're taking the bull by the horns.

Heather strolls over to the booth.

INEZ (CONT'D)

Who knows? It might mean a way for them to get back on TV.

HEATHER

How's everything?

David, Inez, Janet, and Margaret gesture their approval.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

Can I get you anything else?

David gestures toward Janet and Margaret.

DAVID

Yeah. See if you can talk some sense into these two Queens of Swing.

HEATHER

So you two are actually gonna do it!

MARGARET

We're halfway done with putting the band together.

HEATHER

Good luck, you two. Me and my boyfriend go out dancing once in a while at Knott's Berry Farm...and sometimes we catch the big bands.

Now David looks flabbergasted.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

Well, I'd better get going.

Heather hands Janet, Margaret, David, and Inez a bill each and leaves the booth.

DAVID

Margie...Jan...you paid her to say that.

Margaret finishes her coffee.

MARGARET

No we didn't, but we're inviting you and Inez to our debut...at Le Jubile. Over at La Brea and Washington.

JANET

(to David and Inez)

We'll both keep you posted on when it'll be.

DAVID

You do that. Meantime, I'll see if I can rent a laugh track.

Janet and Margaret grin, then chuckle.

INT. OLYMPIC BLVD. LUTHERAN CHURCH FAMILY ROOM - NIGHT

Barbara (on lead guitar), Tess (rhythm guitar), Margaret (acoustic bass), Terri (drums), Julia (piano), Sue Ann (trumpet), Janet (trombone), Candy (tenor sax), and Dorothy (alto sax) swing the final twenty-nine bars of a torrid rendition of Lionel Hampton's "Rockin' in Rhythm."

When the band finishes, jubilation abounds.

MARGARET

Very good, you guys. Let's take...whatever.

BARBARA

As long as it's at least five.

MARGARET

Right.

Margaret gestures her bandmates into seated positions.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

We've got some good news to tell you about...we're going out on the road!

Massive surprise grips the musicians...and it morphs quickly into jubilation.

JANET

We've got to. We need nine more musicians before we can call ourselves a serious big band.

Janet's remark silences the other performers.

JANET (CONT'D)

Well, look around. We don't have a trombone section. We don't have enough trumpet players. And we don't have a bass player.

MARGARET

I'd play bass, you guys, but I don't really want to be the bass player. That's why we need more musicians...Janet and I planned to play a variety of instruments.

Some of Margaret's and Janet's colleagues look surprised.

JANET

Like Barbara, Louise, and Irlene
Mandrell used to do on TV.

CANDY

But that's country!

MARGARET

So we need you to do one thing for
us...if you can.

(getting on one knee)

We'd like you to spend a month with
us going across the country in
search of talent.

Terri nods in resignation, Tess and Barbara groan, and Sue
Ann shrugs.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

It was just a thought.

TESS

Ya coulda thought about that this
summer...when school was out.

Barbara nods.

JANET

Sue Ann...what do you think?

SUE ANN

I'd really love to go with
you...but John and Paul need a
mother as well as a father.

MARGARET

Dorothy and Terri, we see your
point, what with teaching.

(getting up)

Is anybody able to leave with us in
two months?

CANDY, JULIA

(but not in unison)

Yeah!

MARGARET

Great!

(walks around)

Bring as many clothes as you can,
as much money as you can. It's
gonna be a lot of fun.

JANET
Any questions?

Nobody responds for a few seconds...until:

CANDY
We're bringing music, aren't we?

All eyes turn to Candy.

EXT. BRUCE'S AND JANET'S HOUSE, BURBANK, CA - DAY

Janet and Bruce make a final inspection of the RV to make sure all systems are "go."

Candy, Julia, and Margaret emerge from the RV; Julia walks over to Bruce and Janet on this cloudy, somewhat cool day.

JULIA
(pulling out a coin)
Bruce, call the toss.

Julia flips the coin as Bruce makes the call:

BRUCE
Heads!

It's tails.

JULIA
Janet...what would you like to do?

JANET
Well, I elect to drive...first thing we do is pick up Sue Ann.

Margaret, Julia, and Candy look surprised.

JANET (CONT'D)
She talked it over with her husband and changed her mind!

In jubilation, Candy, Julia, and Margaret mob Janet.

EXT. INTERSTATE 5 - JANET'S RV - DAY

Even this early in the morning, movement on the freeway slows down to a crawl.

INT. JANET'S RV - DAY

The RV seats Janet (the driver) and Bruce (he's asleep) comfortably...and seats Candy, Julia, Margaret, and Sue Ann quite admirably.

EXT. CASTRO THEATER, SAN FRANCISCO, CA - NIGHT

The RV tries to handle a parking space that proves too small.

INT. CASTRO THEATER STAGE - NIGHT

Space is no problem inside the Castro, a large palace that packs plenty of Art Deco charm.

Onstage, VIRGINIA EDES (23, energetic) tries to charm Margaret and Janet with her ability on the baritone sax.

The tune: Bix Beiderbecke's "In a Mist," where Sue Ann (trumpet), Julia (piano), Candy (tenor sax), Janet (drums), and Margaret (acoustic bass) back Virginia.

Well into the tune, Virginia and Candy play a four-bar bridge before the rest of the combo joins them for another three foggy bars.

INT. CASTRO THEATER LOWER LEVEL - NIGHT

TEN OTHER HOPEFULS sit alongside Bruce, who takes notes.

INT. CASTRO THEATER STAGE - NIGHT

Julia performs a five-bar solo before she gives way to Candy and Virginia, who toot that four-bar bridge a second time.

Candy, Janet, Julia, Margaret, Sue Ann, and Virginia groove during the next three bars. When Julia's next five-bar solo comes up, she slows down the music.

Now the music thins down to piano and trumpet as Julia and Sue Ann reprise the intro for a bar (this passage modulates).

The beat picks up for four bars when Janet's drums reenter the music.

During these four bars, Virginia moves over to a marimba; she plays it when the music slows down again.

Up above Virginia's marimba work, Sue Ann takes a solo, Julia gets another, then the twosome team up.

The whole combo moves back into the faster theme for eight bars before Virginia and her marimba lead the sextet to the tune's end...where they slow it down.

Now Virginia climbs atop the marimba to dance on it!

INT. CASTRO THEATER LOWER LEVEL - NIGHT

The ten hopefuls look so demoralized they leave the theater.

INT. CASTRO THEATER STAGE - NIGHT

Janet leaves the drum set as Virginia climbs off the marimba.

JANET

Virginia...welcome to the
Alexander/O'Keefe Band.

Virginia hugs Janet, then Margaret, then...Virginia's expression changes.

VIRGINIA

I work at a fitness center over in
Oakland...and they own centers in
LA, too.

Margaret and Janet look puzzled.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)

What if my boss won't let me
transfer to one of our LA fitness
centers?

(running offstage)

I've gotta find a phone!

Janet and Margaret eyeball each other as Virginia exits.

INT. STAGE AT OMAHA ORPHEUM THEATER, OMAHA, NE - DAY

Virginia relaxes onstage as she finds herself in a smaller
(but no less elegant) Art Deco landmark.

MARGARET

We're ready for our next
contestant.

(in a deep, husky voice)

Won't you sign in, please?

DAISIANNA NELSON (20, soft-spoken; cute), in her red
overalls, strides from the lower level to the stage; she has
a trombone case in tow.

With one hand still gripping the case, she signs her name on the portable chalkboard at center stage and steps up to the mike in front.

DAISIANNA

You can call me Daisy if you
like...back home in Hastings, my
friends call me "Sweetiepie."

INT. OMAHA ORPHEUM THEATER LOWER LEVEL - DAY

Some of the OTHER AUDITIONERS groan or laugh.

Some hopefuls wear T-shirts and/or baseball caps labeled "NEBRASKA" or "HUSKERS." (Most wear something red.)

INT. STAGE AT OMAHA ORPHEUM THEATER - DAY

Daisianna reaches into her shirt pocket and pulls out her eyeglasses. She puts them on.

DAISIANNA

I wanted to join the band because I
didn't want to throw away the music
I learned in high school.

Margaret and Janet nod.

DAISIANNA (CONT'D)

I play guitar, banjo, French horn,
piano, organ, and harpsichord...

Daisianna pulls a trombone out of her case.

DAISIANNA (CONT'D)

But for the audition, I've narrowed
it down to this.

She puts the ends together and the mouthpiece on before she turns to Margaret, Janet, and Co.

DAISIANNA (CONT'D)

(in a whisper)

Do you know "Little Brown Jug?"

Margaret's eight-bar intro (on bass fiddle) answers Daisianna's question.

Right after that bass intro, Candy (on tenor sax) and Virginia (on baritone sax) jump in for eight bars that add to the Glenn Miller-type feel.

In the next eight bars, Daisianna's trombone and Julia's piano underpin the beat while Janet's drums sizzle and the saxes cook.

Sue Ann weighs in with a sixteen-bar trumpet solo. In it, her playing becomes stronger with each bar.

Trumpet still dominates in the following eight bars, but now bass and drums add punctuation to Sue Ann's phrasing.

Candy takes the lead for the next sixteen bars.

It's now Call-and-Response Time for the next six bars (the song's bridge); Daisianna and Virginia provide the "calls" and Candy and Sue Ann do the "responses."

Daisianna and her accompanists have quite a ball!

EXT. OLSON PERFORMING ARTS CENTER, KANSAS CITY, MO - DAY

This is a low-lying, modernistic building.

INT. WHITE RECITAL HALL AT OLSON PAC - STAGE - DAY

In this smallish auditorium, the music's still "Little Brown Jug." Margaret, Julia, Sue Ann, and Candy play the same instruments as before, but this time, Janet plays trombone and Virginia's on drums.

And the six musicians help KATE SUFFREN (25, goodnatured, Black), on acoustic bass, put "Little Brown Jug" over.

INT. WHITE RECITAL HALL SEATING - DAY

TWENTY OTHER PROSPECTS join Bruce (who catches the show on a boombox while he takes notes) in watching Kate.

INT. WHITE RECITAL HALL STAGE - DAY

Sue Ann's the lead player for two bars; Janet and Candy join her for another pair of bars. And Virginia provides some heavy, chunky drumming along the way.

Margaret switches from bass to electric guitar to provide jagged lines for Sue Ann, who provides hot solo work for the next sixteen bars.

INT. WHITE RECITAL HALL SEATING - DAY

Bruce turns to THE NEAREST PERSON to him during Sue Ann's latest solo.

BRUCE

Kate's the first prospect we've had
trying out on bass.

KANSAS CITY PROSPECT

If I were strong enough to carry
one of them, I'd play, too.

Bruce nods.

INT. WHITE RECITAL HALL STAGE - DAY

Janet's now the soloist; she gets sixteen bars all her own.
Early on, she prances toward Kate, who thumps away.

Kate twirls her bass fiddle during the three staccato horn
bursts by Sue Ann, Janet, and Candy. Those bursts come before
a twelve-bar passage where the combo works the song's theme
one more time.

Janet and Sue Ann stuff mutes into their brass instruments
and lead their colleagues into twelve soft bars that give
Kate and Margaret a chance to shine on their instruments.

Two staccato horn bursts push "Little Brown Jug" to its two-
bar conclusion.

Margaret and Kate shake hands.

KATE

Have you got enough time to hear me
on fiddle?

Margaret's mouth flies open in disbelief.

INT. STAGE AT WORLD THEATER, ST. PAUL, MN - DAY

This early-Twentieth-Century theater features ornate
plasterwork. Burgundy's the dominant color in this venue.

ALYCE NORDQUIST (22, team-oriented, Hollywood beautiful)
strides from her seat in the lower level to center
stage...where she signs her name on that rolling chalkboard.

ALYCE

(into the mike)

I don't know about the rest of you,
but I'm ready to get started...how
about a little bit of "Mama Don'
'Low," Glenn Miller style?

Alyce receives nods from Janet and Virginia...and stares from Candy, Julia, Margaret, and Sue Ann. In fact, Julia peeks at the chalkboard, then at Alyce.

JULIA

Maybe you'd better start this one out, Alyce.

A nodding Alyce grabs an electric guitar, plugs it into an amp, and launches a version of "Mama Don' 'Low" that closely parallels "In the Mood."

When this becomes clear, Virginia moves to the drum set and hi-hats her way into the song...a series of sixteen-bar blocks.

Alyce stays on guitar for the first thirty-two bars; after the eighth bar, Margaret comes up with some two-note bass fiddle lines. In the sixteenth bar, Virginia adds snare and bass drums to the mix.

In the song's twenty-fourth bar, Julia falls in on piano.

Between bars twenty-five and thirty-two, Candy, Janet, and Sue Ann improvise on tenor sax, trombone, and trumpet, respectively.

At the start of the third block, Alyce puts down the guitar and picks up a clarinet...to toot away for sixteen more bars.

In the fourth block, Alyce runs to the piano to turn those sixteen bars into a duet with an initially-surprised Julia.

INT. WORLD THEATER LOWER LEVEL - DAY

As he tapes the performance on his boombox, Bruce looks awed...while THE FOURTEEN CANDIDATES seated near him stare at the stage in disbelief.

INT. STAGE AT WORLD THEATER - DAY

For the fifth set of sixteen bars, Alyce jogs to a marimba, which she plays with a pair of mallets in each hand. In verse six, she toots a trumpet.

Now Alyce jumps off the stage (or prances off) to seat herself at the theater's three-manual Wurlitzer pipe organ...

INT. WORLD THEATER ORCHESTRA PIT - DAY

...where she activates the lift to bring the console to the same level as the stage.

INT. STAGE AT WORLD THEATER - DAY

While Margaret, Janet, Julia, Sue Ann, Candy, and Virginia provide a rousing accompaniment, Alyce delivers the next sixteen bars on that pipe organ.

And when she's done on the organ, Alyce runs toward a harp.

INT. WORLD THEATER LOWER LEVEL - DAY

Alyce's rivals and Bruce gasp.

INT. STAGE AT WORLD THEATER - DAY

While they gasp, Alyce picks up a harmonica and its holder off the floor, puts the harmonica in the holder and the holder around her neck, and sits next to the harp.

She plays the ensuing sixteen bars on both instruments!

Alyce goes to a smaller drum set to bat out a chorus.

On these sixteen bars, Alyce's accompanists drop out of "Mama Don' 'Low" and just admire this prospect's talent.

For the last block, Alyce plays trombone...a move that forces Janet to stick a plunger into her own trombone. Meanwhile, the backup work heats up even more.

Margaret, Janet, Candy, Sue Ann, Julia, Virginia, and Alyce tack on an eight-bar ending. In it, Alyce puts down her trombone and tries Virginia's baritone sax.

INT. WORLD THEATER LOWER LEVEL - DAY

Bruce and the hopefuls applaud!

INT. STAGE AT WORLD THEATER - DAY

Alyce waves at the combo, packs up her trombone and her harmonica, and...

MARGARET

I understand there's one...one more
contestant.

...heads off the stage.

INT. WORLD THEATER LOWER LEVEL - DAY

THAT CONTESTANT grabs her coat, puts it on, grabs her instrument, and leaves the theater.

TWIN CITIES PROSPECT
 (on her way out)
 Nah. That's okay.

Onstage, Margaret and Janet look surprised...as does Alyce, who returns to her seat at the lower level.

TWIN CITIES PROSPECT (CONT'D)
 Garrison Keillor was a hard enough
 act for me to follow, but...Alyce
 Nordquist?

Some remaining hopefuls shrug.

EXT. INTERSTATE 35, OKLAHOMA CITY, OK - JANET'S RV - NIGHT

Not a single cloud in the sky tonight.

INT. JANET'S RV - NIGHT

This time, Bruce is the driver. He's worried.

BRUCE
 I don't think this RV's gonna make
 it. It doesn't know we've got half
 the country left.

JANET
 Oh, Bruce...relax. This box has
 turned over more often than the Los
 Angeles Clippers against the
 Detroit Pistons.

Janet's remark leaves Bruce even more worried.

EXT. SIX FLAGS OVER TEXAS, ARLINGTON, TX - NIGHT

The RV barely pulls into the front entrance...and becomes one of the few vehicles on the premises.

EXT. CRAZY HORSE SALOON AT SIX FLAGS OVER TEXAS - DAY

The saloon's in a recreated Wild West town.

Margaret, Janet, and Co. trudge out of the RV with their instruments; they head for the only venue open to them.

JANET
 (checking her watch)
 Barely made it!

CANDY
 At least we're fashionably late.

INT. CRAZY HORSE BARROOM - DAY

It's made up to look like a Wild West saloon...right down to a chandelier.

AUDITIONING MUSICIANS fill every seat in the place. And that means Bruce takes notes while erect.

INT. CRAZY HORSE STAGE - DAY

Sue Ann holds her trumpet, Candy sticks a reed into her tenor sax, Janet lifts a trombone from its stand, and Margaret tunes her guitar.

Meanwhile, Virginia sits behind the drum set and Julia sits at a pre-1920 upright piano.

SUE ANN

This doesn't look like the right place to hold swing band tryouts...maybe we can do--

VIRGINIA

Sue Ann, would you like a rope around your neck?

Sue Ann looks out at the crowd of hopefuls and comes away all teeth before Margaret turns to her.

MARGARET

Yeah. This is the only place we could get.

(to the hopefuls)

We're ready for our next contestant.

Stetson-hat-wearing BETSY PARKHILL (26, clever, down-to-Earth, sexy; Texas twang) strides toward the stage as she totes a trumpet case.

She signs her name on the rolling chalkboard before she turns to Janet's and Margaret's combo.

BETSY

Y'all know "The Man Ah Love?"

Margaret, Janet, and Julia nod.

JANET

I had to learn that for "The Jennings Family."

Betsy's mouth flies open...only to morph into a clever grin.

SAME SCENE - A FEW MINUTES LATER

To put over this Gershwin standard, Sue Ann tries Margaret's guitar while Margaret plays string bass, Virginia's on vibes, and Janet's on drums.

Thirty-two bars into the song, Candy launches a sixteen-bar tenor solo.

Candy's solo proves typical of the way this version of "The Man I Love" works: Bass and drums land right dead on the beat while the other instruments meander through the melody.

Sue Ann does the best she can during her eight-bar bridge.

Virginia plays the next solo; in it, she picks up the same theme as Sue Ann in the same number of bars.

Betsy takes the song's final nineteen bars.

She's a revelation: Betsy outperforms the accompanists and makes them sound like pikers.

INT. CRAZY HORSE BARROOM - DAY

Bruce looks so impressed by Betsy's blazing solo that he tosses his notes aside.

INT. CRAZY HORSE STAGE - DAY

With five bars left in Betsy's solo, the music slows down to a blaring, fiery climax. Janet's lone bass-drum beat ends the whole thing.

SAME SCENE - A FEW MOMENTS LATER

Janet, Margaret, and Betsy, the lone patrons, stand next to the swinging front doors.

MARGARET

Betsy, we've never had a tryout as successful as yours. Where...how'd you get those chops?

BETSY

Margie, there's something Ah've got to tail you.

MARGARET

The name of your last music teacher in Fort Worth?

BETSY

You see, Ah've got me a little
photography studio back home in
Mount Pleasant...and Ah ain't 'bout
to give it up.

Margaret looks disappointed as Betsy waves and walks away.

Janet hugs Margaret as the latter's disappointment becomes a
slow burn.

EXT. HOUSTON, TX - DAY

Some impressive series of skyscrapers dominate the skyline.

EXT. INTERSTATE 45 - JANET'S RV - DAY

That RV SOUNDS as if it's on its deathbed.

Only the snail-like pace of Houston traffic keeps Janet's
recreational vehicle alive.

As soon as an exit nears, the RV pulls off I-45.

EXT. SERVICE STATION - DAY

Once the RV comes to a stop in front of the garage, Margaret,
Janet, Bruce, Julia, Candy, Sue Ann, and Virginia climb out.

Margaret paces the cement; Janet watches her while the others
stand outside the building.

JANET

Margaret, you're gonna wear the
pavement out.

MARGARET

I don't believe it!
(still pacing)
The best prospect we've had
yet...and she was just playing with
us! What the hell did she try out
for?

JANET

But we've got the Southeast and the
Northeast to go th--

GUS (50s), the station's mechanic, taps Janet on the
shoulder.

GUS
 Hey...what you doin' right here in
 Houston?

Janet turns around and eyeballs Gus.

JANET
 Well, if you can fix this RV, we
 can leave Houston.

SAME SCENE - A BIT LATER

Margaret still paces the pavement; the other musicians and
 Bruce continue to stand outside the station.

Gus finishes his diagnosis on Janet's RV. He doesn't look too
 happy as he walks over to Janet.

GUS
 Uh, Miss O'Keeffe, Ah'm afraid you
 gonna hafta git you another motor
 home.

Virginia catches wind of Janet's and Gus' conversation. She
 walks over to the RV's engine compartment...

GUS (CONT'D)
 Or else git you another engine.

JANET
 Wait a minute. We'd already put an
 engine in there in 1984--
 (looks at Margaret)
 Margie, go call your husband!

...and pulls something out of there!

Margaret goes inside the station to make the call.

VIRGINIA
 I think you've got a broken fan
 belt, Janet.

Janet, Bruce, and Gus reach the RV; Virginia holds the broken
 fan belt for all to see.

GUS
 (to Janet)
 How kin a famous TV star like you
 not afford a new motor home...or
 even a new car?

BRUCE
By not working.

JANET
That's why we're all across the
country trying to fix that.

GUS
Ever thought about doin' another
one o' them horror...wait a minute!
Jodie Foster won an Oscar playin'
one o' them rape victims--

Janet grabs the busted belt from Virginia and pretends to strangle Gus.

INT. SERVICE STATION - DAY

Margaret calls Ray from a pay phone.

MARGARET
(into phone)
How are we doing? We've just lost
the best trumpet player we've ever
heard in person to goof-proof
prints...she runs a photography
studio, Ray!

A CUSTOMER walks inside and completes a purchase while A CASHIER watches from behind the counter.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
And Janet's RV is on its last legs,
meaning we may never get to New
Orleans...but we're doing all
right...

Bruce, Julia, and Sue Ann walk inside to put coins into a vending machine.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
We've landed a trombone player from
Hastings, Nebraska; a baritone
player from Oakland, California; a
bass player from Kansas City,
Missouri who also plays a mean
fiddle.

Now Virginia, Janet, and a reluctant Candy go inside to use the vending machine(s).

MARGARET (CONT'D)

And in the Twin Cities, we found a young woman who plays twenty-nine instruments...quite well...

EXT. DIXON CONCERT HALL, NEW ORLEANS, LA - DAY

Janet's RV, with a new lease on life, passes by a historic, two-story building on the Tulane University campus.

INT. DIXON STAGE - DAY

Janet and Margaret look out at an auditorium whose lower level teems with PROSPECTS...of both genders this time.

All but one of the prospects is awake.

Margaret and Janet stroll to a center-stage mike each.

JANET

(into a mike)

They weren't kidding when they said New Orleans LOVES music! Glad you all could stay and listen to each other!

All the awake prospects applaud.

MARGARET

(into another mike)

We're down to one more candidate.

INT. DIXON LOWER LEVEL - DAY

GABRIELLE FELDER (26, awestruck, Black), trumpet case in hand, sleeps in her seat. THE PROSPECT NEXT TO HER, also seated, tries to rouse Gabrielle.

NEW ORLEANS PROSPECT

Lady...wake it on up, y'hear?

Aroused at last, Gabrielle walks to the stage...

INT. DIXON STAGE - DAY

...where she signs her name on the same chalkboard from other auditions. She joins Margaret and Janet at the two mikes.

JANET

Maybe we can try this later, Gabrielle...or better yet, tomorrow.

GABRIELLE

Are you kidding? Ah've walked two hundred and six miles just to git here, and Ah ain't gonna come away empty.

MARGARET

Good heavens! Where'd you come from?

GABRIELLE

Jackson, Mississippi.

Julia joins the conversation.

JULIA

What?
(eyeballing Gabrielle)
You walked?

MARGARET

I guess so.

GABRIELLE

Wail, actually, Ah caught a ride a stone's th'ow outside of McComb.

Julia and Margaret scratch their heads.

SAME SCENE - A BIT LATER

Gabrielle's selection is "Careless Love," where Sue Ann plays guitar, Julia piano, Margaret acoustic bass, Janet drums, Virginia baritone sax, and Candy tenor sax.

The latter six give Gabrielle eight beats before she sings:

GABRIELLE (CONT'D)

(into a mike)

*Love, oh love, oh careless
love./Cain't you see what careless
love done to me?/It made me roam
and leave mah happy home./It was
love, oh love, oh careless love.*

While Gabrielle sings, the combo churns on.

GABRIELLE (CONT'D)

*It tied me to your apron
strings./It tied me to your apron
strings./You said that you loved me
and it didn't mean a thang./It was
love, oh love, oh careless love.*

Gabrielle adds sixteen bars of her own trumpet work; here, she plays a muted trumpet that adds a crying, syrupy touch to the accompanists' rocking beat.

Meanwhile, the piano's part gets more percussive.

"Careless Love" ends in two notes. Afterwards, Sue Ann, Julia, and Margaret look at Gabrielle in happy amazement.

EXT. GRAND OLE OPRY HOUSE, NASHVILLE, TN - DAY

This is the snazzy-looking, two-story 1970s structure.

INT. OPRY STUDIO A - DAY

Not the famous main stage, but the TV studio known for its use on "Hee Haw."

Julia and Margaret (one sits, the other doesn't) recline against a pre-1920 upright piano.

Candy, Janet, and Sue Ann watch Virginia pace the floor.

VIRGINIA

It's been two hours. Anybody know we're here?

MARGARET

With this room they gave us, who knows?

SUE ANN

(to Janet)

Why don't we run through some of our numbers...if it's all right with--

Margaret, Janet, Sue Ann, Julia, Candy, and Virginia tune up when MAY JUNE MCKOY (38, friendly, folksy; rural Georgia twang) arrives with her trombone case.

MAY JUNE

Ah'm mighty sorry 'bout bein' late.

JULIA

We're just glad you showed up, uh--

MAY JUNE

May June McKoy.

May June pulls a trombone out of her case and puts the instrument's ends together.

MAY JUNE (CONT'D)

Ah've been tryin' to become a session musician here in Nashville for years, but it's hard to crack that ol' "good ol' boy" network.

JANET

I think it's time to strike the word "network" from the dictionary.

Janet's crack brings laughter from the rest of the gang...with Margaret's laughter the loudest.

CANDY

May June...what would you like us to strike up?

MAY JUNE

Y'all know "St. James Infirmary?"

JULIA

(nodding)

I know an X-rated version--

VIRGINIA

That's okay, Julia. We'll do it straight.

That means Virginia on baritone sax, Candy on tenor, and Janet on drums...as well as Margaret, Julia, and Sue Ann on bass, piano, and trumpet, respectively.

They help May June come up with a brassy four-bar intro to this melancholy, lugubrious blues.

MAY JUNE

(singing)

*Ah went down to St. James
Infirmary,/And Ah heard mah baby
groan./And Ah felt so
brokenhearted./He used to be mah
very own.*

May June's vocal treatment of the tune strikes a positive chord with her accompanists.

MAY JUNE (CONT'D)

*Ah tried so hard to keep from
cryin'./Mah heart felt just like
lead./He was all that Ah had to
live for./Oh, Ah just a-wish it was
a-me instead.*

During May June's vocal, bass lopes along and piano prances while the horns provide drawn-out, one-note lines.

The instrumental break belongs to May June and her trombone. She blows out long, drawn-out, dirgelike notes while Sue Ann, Virginia, and Candy counter with staccato lines.

And it all puts a grin on Margaret's face.

INT. STAGE AT SENATE THEATER, DETROIT, MI - DAY

In this large, opulent theater, A CLARINET PLAYER auditions to the tune of "So Rare."

This time, Julia's at a grand piano, Virginia's on drums, Sue Ann's on trumpet, Candy tries Virginia's baritone sax, and Janet's on trombone.

Margaret plays the theater's four-manual Wurlitzer pipe organ...the one whose console features a Mayan motif.

Despite the competence of the accompanists, "So Rare" doesn't work out for the clarinetist.

Now the song's over...and Margaret looks glum as the Motor City hopeful leaves the stage.

MARGARET
(to her bandmates)
Goose egg.

Some of the accompanists shrug.

EXT. RADIO CITY MUSIC HALL, NEW YORK CITY, NY - DAY

Lots of PEDESTRIANS (many bundled up for the winter) hurry around this iconic building.

INT. RADIO CITY GREAT STAGE - DAY

CARLINE FUNCHESS (24, Black, serious, stout) and best buddy GENEVIEVE GALLARNEAU (23, White, a lifelong class clown) lead a rousing version of "Don't Let Me Be Lonely Tonight."

Genevieve plays clarinet, Carline's on alto sax, Margaret plays electric guitar, Candy plays piano, Sue Ann's on trumpet, and Virginia pounds those drums.

Janet and Julia work the twin consoles of the hall's famous Mighty Wurlitzer pipe organ.

Right now, clarinet and alto sax are the lead instruments in a sixteen-bar instrumental break. At the end of the break, Carline and Genevieve add their tonsils.

CARLINE

(singing)

*Go away, then, damn you./Go on and
do as you please./You ain't gonna
see me gettin'/Down on my knees.*

GENEVIEVE

I can just imagine the scene,
Carline.

INT. RADIO CITY LOWER LEVEL - DAY

Bruce and the HOPEFULS seated around him crack up in goodnatured laughter.

INT. RADIO CITY GREAT STAGE - DAY

Carline playfully scowls at Genevieve before the two contestants resume the vocal on this James Taylor tune.

CARLINE, GENEVIEVE

*Do me wrong./Do me right right
now./Tell me lies,/But hold me
tight./Save your goodbyes/'Til the
morning light,/But don't let me be
lonely tonight.*

As the accompaniment heats up, Genevieve and Carline turn instrumentalists again to lead Janet, Margaret, and Co. into another sixteen-bar instrumental passage.

When it ends, the instrumentation drops out as Carline and Genevieve sing again.

CARLINE, GENEVIEVE (CONT'D)

Don't let me be lonely tonight.

Candy, Carline, Genevieve, Janet, Julia, Margaret, Sue Ann, and Virginia end the number in two notes.

Behind strong O.S. APPLAUSE, Margaret moves to the mike at center stage.

MARGARET

You guys have been great! Thanks
for coming!

INT. RADIO CITY LOWER LEVEL - DAY

The applause comes to an abrupt end (and the hopefuls look shocked to the core).

EXT. RADIO CITY MUSIC HALL - DAY

Candy, Sue Ann, Julia, Virginia, Janet, and Margaret join Bruce on the way to the RV when Margaret stops her cohorts.

MARGARET

Before we get in, you guys, I want to announce that we're having a party...and you're all invited!

JANET

It's at me and Bruce's! Two days before Christmas!

MARGARET

And...everybody who auditioned successfully has been invited!

Surprise...laughter...jubilation.

JULIA

Are they gonna be able to get to LA all right?

Janet and Margaret nod.

MONTAGE SEQUENCE

EXT. INTERSTATE 80, NJ-PA BORDER - JANET'S RV - DAY

The RV comes to a stop; when Margaret (the driver) reaches out to pay the toll, SOME DRIVERS leave their vehicles and search for autographs.

EXT. INTERSTATE 80, CLEVELAND, OH - DAY

A LONG LINE OF VEHICLES follows the RV.

EXT. INTERSTATES 80/94, NEAR GARY, IN - JANET'S RV - NIGHT

The RV pulls off the Indiana East-West Toll Road...

INT. JANET'S RV - NIGHT

...much to the jubilation of Janet and her passengers. (Bruce whips out a calculator.)

INT. ROOM 1012 AT PALMER HOUSE, CHICAGO, IL - NIGHT

Candy puts her nightgown on while Virginia (still in her street clothes) bounces into bed...with a thud.

EXT. SEARS TOWER, CHICAGO, IL - DAY

Despite the blustery weather, Sue Ann tries to take a photo of Margaret, Janet, Julia, Candy, Bruce, and Virginia...while PASSERSBY stop and stare.

INT. DU SABLE MUSEUM, CHICAGO, IL - DAY

Julia pretends to be a tour guide...to teach her cohorts about African-American history.

EXT. MORMON TABERNACLE, SALT LAKE CITY, UT - DAY

The Gang of Seven hurry inside this landmark.

INT. MORMON TABERNACLE SANCTUARY - DAY

Seated at that huge organ, Virginia poses Janet, Margaret, and Co. into making like the Mormon Tabernacle Choir...then photographs them.

INT. HARRAH'S, RENO, NV - NIGHT

Candy plays the slot machines...without success.

EXT. SERVICE STATION, OAKLAND, CA - DAY

Bruce drops Virginia off here; she then locates a rental moving van.

EXT. INTERSTATE 5, LOS ANGELES, CA - JANET'S RV - DAY

Janet's RV stands out in the heavy traffic.

END MONTAGE

EXT. BRUCE'S AND JANET'S HOUSE, BURBANK, CA - NIGHT

The area around the house teems with vehicles.

INT. BRUCE'S AND JANET'S BASEMENT - DEN - NIGHT

MUSIC from the den stereo plays down low...laughter fills the room...it's party time!

All the bandmembers except Virginia congregate in the den; they, Bruce, and Ray engage in AD LIBBED conversations.

John and Paul celebrate there with their dad (and Sue Ann's husband), TODD RICE (34, jovial).

TODD
 (to Alyce)
 My wife told me a lot about you.
 She tells me you really tore up the
 audition in Minnesota.

ALYCE
 (shrugging)
 Well...I had a lot of fun.

TODD
 I can't wait to see you in action--

Sue Ann nudges Todd into silence.

Most of the revelers eat snacks and/or drink nonalcoholic beverages...and the conversations continue strong.

DAISIANNA
 (to Candy)
 You're a real, honest-to-goodness
 Los Angeles native? Is the smog as
 bad as they say it is?

CANDY
 Yes, I am...and it is, and you get
 used to it.

Margaret turns to Janet.

MARGARET
 I'm still ticked off about us
 losing Betsy, so...let's anchor me
 at trumpet so we'll have three.

A reluctant Janet nods.

EXT. BRUCE'S AND JANET'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A rented moving van and an eighteen-wheeler pull up along the street in a precarious way.

Once the vehicles rest, Virginia climbs out of the moving van and Betsy leaves the eighteen-wheeler. Both women head for the house.

As Virginia walks toward Janet's and Bruce's house, she gazes at the tractor-trailer in shock...then at its driver.

VIRGINIA

I thought...you weren't coming.

BETSY

Now you know better'n to believe
all them little ol' tall tales.

Betsy and Virginia make it to the front door together. The former rings the doorbell, but frowns when she finds no immediate answer.

INT. BRUCE'S AND JANET'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Janet hears the incessantly-ringing doorbell and sprints to the front door; she opens the door...and backs off in amazement when she sees Betsy with Virginia.

Janet gestures Virginia and Betsy inside.

INT. BRUCE'S AND JANET'S BASEMENT - DEN - NIGHT

The party continues strong.

KATE

Now that I'm here, Terri, I'm gonna go to the one place I've wanted to see out here...Disneyland. What's the best way to get there?

TERRI

Man, that's hard.

Kate's mouth drops.

TERRI (CONT'D)

Growing up in Boston, I never really learned how to give directions.

Margaret's shrill whistle ends all conversations.

MARGARET

Everybody...if you're interested, there's a poker game upstairs.

Margaret heads upstairs...only to find Janet, Virginia, and Betsy in a jog down the stairs.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

I thought you didn't want to give up your studio, Betsy.

BETSY

Right! Ah'm gonna set it up right
here in LA...Ah'm movin' mah studio
here so Ah can join your band!

Virginia nods, then joins Betsy, Janet, and Margaret in a series of handshakes.

INT. JANET'S AND BRUCE'S DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Margaret, Janet, Betsy, Barbara, Kate, Alyce, Tess, and Julia play poker...on a table that seems too long for the task.

MARGARET

We're playing straight poker...that means nothing wild.

Each player turns cards up around the table until someone uncovers a jack.

Ray and Bruce enter the room.

BRUCE

Janet...why don'tcha get that leaf outa there?

JANET

Bruce...why couldn't we get a round dining table?

The first player to get a jack shuffles the cards prior to dealing the cards.

INT. JANET'S AND BRUCE'S BASEMENT - DEN - NIGHT

Dorothy, Candy, Sue Ann, Terri, Virginia, Daisianna, Gabrielle, May June, Carline, and Genevieve sit in a circle on the floor. (Some of them continue to eat.)

DOROTHY

(to Carline and Genevieve)
Wanna welcome you both to Los Angeles. Hope the next snow you see is artificial.

Several circlemates double up in laughter.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)

Did either one of you...get mugged?

CARLINE

Only at home. My brother's a boxer...and I was his sparring partner.

Some in the circle give Carline doubletakes.

INT. JANET'S AND BRUCE'S DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The poker game proves interesting; all eight players concentrate hard and work with care.

Barbara puts three chips into the pot.

BARBARA

Well, somebody's got to take a chance. I'm betting seventy-five cents.

Betsy tosses six chips into the pot.

BETSY

And Ah'll see your seventy-five cents and raise you seventy-five cents.

JULIA

That's it.
(throws cards down)
I'm out.

Tess and Margaret throw their cards down, too.

ALYCE

I want to ask you all a question.

The other poker players stare at Alyce.

ALYCE (CONT'D)

Do any of you smoke cigars?

Janet, Julia, Kate, and Tess look surprised.

BARBARA, BETSY, MARGARET

(but not in unison)

Yeah.

ALYCE

Can I have one?

Margaret, Betsy, and Barbara each hand Alyce a cigar.

KATE

Janet...do you know where we can
find a windmill?

While some poker players bust out in laughs, Alyce examines all three cigars.

Betsy's is a giant, Barbara's is a Churchill (one step down in length from a giant), and Margaret's is a double corona.

Alyce tries Betsy's cigar (and puts Barbara's and Margaret's in her shirt pocket or, if possible, inside her own bra).

INT. JANET'S AND BRUCE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Ray, Bruce, Todd, John, and Paul watch an all-sports channel on that big-screen TV...but THE GAME on the tube bores the husbands to death.

RAY

Isn't there somethin' better on?

BRUCE

Let me fix that right now, Ray.

Bruce grabs the remote control and switches to an all-music channel...much to the jubilation of the other viewers.

INT. JANET'S AND BRUCE'S BASEMENT - DEN - NIGHT

Candy, Carline, Daisianna, Dorothy, Gabrielle, Genevieve, May June, Sue Ann, Terri, and Virginia remain in a circle.

GABRIELLE

Dorothy, you a teacher. Whatcha
thank of the music the kids are
digging?

DOROTHY

I think it's great! Whenever I get
a chance--

SUE ANN

Yeah, but if they want synthesized
drums, maybe they should use a
popcorn popper.

Virginia heads for the piano; Dorothy follows her.

VIRGINIA

(getting seated)
Why don't we sing something?

DOROTHY
 (getting seated, too)
 How about "My Prerogative?"

Sue Ann groans and May June scratches her head.

MAY JUNE
 (to Dorothy and Virginia)
 We're a swing band...shouldn't we
 sang somethin' swing?

General agreement reigns among the women.

Dorothy plays "Take the 'A' Train."

DOROTHY
 Virginia, you know this one?

VIRGINIA
 Run through it first and we'll see.

Genevieve rises and strides toward Virginia and Dorothy. She puts her hands on the two pianists' shoulders.

GENEVIEVE
 Are you two trying to make me
 homesick?

Dorothy stops playing; she and Virginia turn around to look at Genevieve.

INT. JANET'S AND BRUCE'S DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The poker game, in a new round, heats up...and Alyce, Barbara, Betsy, and Margaret smoke cigars as if high rollers in Las Vegas.

The whole thing makes Janet frown.

BARBARA
 Alyce...it's time for five new
 cards.

Dealer Alyce gives Barbara five new cards while Barbara turns in the five offending cards.

BETSY
 (to Barbara)
 Where'd you learn to play like
 that?

BARBARA
 Mom and Dad. They'd challenge me
 and my brothers for our allowance.

Janet goes to the wall and turns the ceiling fan on.

Result: Julia and Tess cheer...a shrugging Kate nods...and Margaret, Betsy, Barbara, and Alyce look surprised.

INT. MARGARET'S AND RAY'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Margaret sits at the grand piano, where she works on arrangements, when the phone RINGS.

MARGARET
 (into phone)
 Hello?

INT. ROOM 311 AT PROFESSIONAL TOWERS - DAY

Phone to his ear, David fiddles with a pen or pencil while seated at his desk.

DAVID
 Hi, Margie. This is David
 Steinmark.

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

MARGARET
 I know you didn't call about an
 acting job, so...let me tell you
 that Janet and I did it! We got our
 band put together!

DAVID
 Well, I'll be a...

David flips his writing instrument over his shoulder.

MARGARET
 Eighteen pieces.

DAVID
 You know, you're making a mistake!
 You're an actress, not a
 bandleader!

MARGARET
 I haven't had an acting job in a
 year! Why shouldn't I have
 something to fall back on?

DAVID

Margie...think about the kids!

MARGARET

No, David, you think about this:
You wouldn't put George Segal down
for having his own Beverly Hills
Unlisted Jazz Band on the side, now
would you?

DAVID

He runs rings around you.

MARGARET

You've never heard me play before!

DAVID

Well...uh...

MARGARET

Tell you what: Why don't you come
out to Cal-Irvine's Concert Hall
tonight and watch the
Alexander/O'Keefe Band rehearse?

DAVID

Tell you what, you ex-"Homesteader"
you: If you succeed at Le Jubile,
then I'll help support your musical
career.

MARGARET

That's more like it!

DAVID

But if you fall flat on your face
over there...you'll never work in
show business again. In this town.

Margaret's mouth flies open.

MARGARET

In that case...get ready to watch
Ray and I pack up and move to his
home town of Pasadena...Texas.

David finds another pen/pencil and flips it away.

EXT. CONCERT HALL AT UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA-IRVINE - NIGHT

This is the biggest of the buildings in Cal-Irvine's Fine
Arts Village, and it's indicative of the rather modern
facilities on this parklike, peaceful campus.

Cal-Irvine is a virtual tomb thanks to the holiday break.

INT. UCI CONCERT HALL BAND ROOM - NIGHT

Chairs are arranged in two rows, and each chair teams up with a music stand. A pair of drum sets split the room in half.

A couple of pianos (and some kind of electronic keyboard, maybe an organ) flank the front row.

Every member of the Alexander/O'Keefe Band is seated.

Behind the band: A large, colorful banner that reads: "THINK LE JUBILE."

DOROTHY

What's a Le Jubile?

JANET

It's this jazz club on La Brea and Washington. They have a "New Talent Night" every Tuesday.

Genevieve gives Dorothy a puzzled look.

GENEVIEVE

Ya sure you've lived here in Los Angeles all ya life?

DOROTHY

Sure have, Genevieve...and I'll tell you something else: I've never been to the Los Angeles County Jail.

The room convulses with laughter.

When the laughter dies down, Margaret moves to the front of the setup and remains erect.

DAISIANNA

Margaret...isn't your agent supposed to be coming tonight?

MARGARET

I'll eat my shoes if he does.

As the laughter picks up again, GRANT MOORE (40s) walks into the band room.

GRANT

Hi, everybody. I'm Grant Moore from the "Los Angeles Times."

Terri looks mortified as she turns to her bandmates.

TERRI

He's one of the paper's music critics.

JANET

And a friend of David's.

Margaret and Terri turn in heavy nods.

GRANT

David Steinmark told me all about you.

DOROTHY

Grant, I remember watching you on the news the night after Maiden Voyage appeared on "The Tonight Show," and Buddy Rich was on there, telling Johnny Carson: "I don't wanna hire a chick for my band."

Some bandmembers nod; others gasp...while Grant looks lost.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)

You told Fritz Coleman you agreed with Buddy--

MARGARET

Dorothy, I like your idea of playing to the kids. With that in mind, let's try..."Peter Gunn."

Some of the musicians' mouths drop.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Art of Noise charted with it in 1986, didn't they?

SUE ANN

I used to peek through my bedroom door to watch "Peter Gunn."

MAY JUNE

Me, too.

Margaret goes without an instrument to conduct the band's version of "Peter Gunn."

This one features Julia on piano; Barbara and Tess on guitars; Kate on string bass; Janet and Terri on drums;

Betsy, Gabrielle, and Sue Ann on trumpets; and Alyce, Daisianna, and May June on trombones.

On top of that, Candy, Carline, Dorothy, Genevieve, and Virginia all play saxophones.

A percussive, hard-driving piano-guitars-drums-bass intro starts it off quite well; four bars later, the brasses and woodwinds enter with sixteen bars of long, drawn-out lines.

But Margaret doesn't like what she hears.

MARGARET
Cut! We're too flat!

Some of the other musicians look bewildered while others nod at Margaret.

And Grant buries his head in his hands.

EXT. MARGARET'S AND RAY'S HOUSE, BURBANK, CA - DAY

Clear skies in Los Angeles on this first day of 1990.

INT. MARGARET'S AND RAY'S BASEMENT - DAY

Margaret, Janet, Ray, and Bruce sit on a couch and/or chairs and watch A FOOTBALL GAME on television.

This game is strong enough to hold the foursome's attention. A bowl of popcorn and a bowl of potato chips on the table in front of the couch keep the two couples busy, too.

Bruce, Ray, Janet, and Margaret concentrate so hard on the game that the only SOUND heard is that of THE SPORTSCASTERS.

Halftime comes at last; Ray breathes a sigh of relief.

RAY
Margie...Janet...you two got to talk.

MARGARET
I just don't think we're ready to play that club. Our "Peter Gunn" stank!

Ray cuts the TV SOUND off with the remote control.

JANET
But our version of "Shout" was good...wasn't it?

MARGARET

Tears for Fears would sue us!

JANET

Margaret, it's bound to be hard at first, trying to explain the music of Count Basie and Benny Goodman to younger Americans.

Janet grabs a handful of popcorn.

JANET (CONT'D)

We're gonna be playing to people who never realized John F. Kennedy was a senator before he became president.

(to Bruce)

You saw us rehearse. What do you think?

Bruce just shrugs while Janet eats the popcorn.

MARGARET

You know what I think, Janet O'Keefe?

JANET

What?

MARGARET

Let's go with our Thirties and Forties material. We're more convincing playing it.

A satisfied Ray hits the remote control again...and the TV SOUND returns.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

What are you gloating about, Raymond Keithley? You haven't even seen the whole band rehearse yet!

(grabbing some chips)

You might even get some material for your fertile mind!

RAY

Awraht, Margie. Tomorrow at UCLA.

Margaret eats the chips; while eating, she grins at Ray.

BRUCE

And Ray...bring a video camera this time.

Ray nods.

EXT. ROYCE HALL AT UCLA - NIGHT

SOME STUDENTS walk by this iconic, Gothic-yoked building.

INT. ROYCE HALL STAGE - NIGHT

Just as at Cal-Irvine's Concert Hall, the Alexander/O'Keeffe Band setup consists of two rows of chairs (each chair has a music stand), the two drum sets in the middle, and a piano on each end of the front row.

The presence of vibes and (somehow) the five-manual Skinner organ console in front of the front row adds a new wrinkle.

All bandmembers except Janet, Kate, and Margaret sit.

JANET

Anybody got a nickel?

KATE

Aren't you getting any more residuals from "The Jennings Family?"

MARGARET

We're gonna toss a nickel, Kate.

Daisianna gets up, gestures Margaret and Janet into facing each other, and pulls out a nickel.

DAISIANNA

(flipping the coin)
Margaret, you make the call.

MARGARET

Heads.

It's tails.

Daisianna rests a hand on Janet's shoulder.

DAISIANNA

What would you like to do?

JANET

Oh, I'm gonna conduct.

INT. ROYCE HALL LOWER LEVEL - NIGHT

At seats in front of the stage, Bruce (who holds his boombox) and Ray look puzzled and amused.

INT. ROYCE HALL STAGE - NIGHT

Terri catches Ray's and Bruce's looks.

TERRI

You guys, Janet's gonna do the
first set and Margaret's gonna
conduct the second.

Ray and Bruce nod as Daisianna sits back down.

Janet moves to the front of the stage, where she removes a
trombone from its stand. Margaret grabs a trumpet.

JANET

(to her bandmates)
We're doing "Let the Good Times
Roll."

Margaret moves to the trumpet section, where she sits in with
Betsy, Sue Ann, and Gabrielle.

Bruce and Ray look puzzled.

Janet readies the band, and what comes out is a bright,
brassy twelve-bar intro.

In it, Kate's walking bass pattern establishes a constant.

On the first beat of the song's fifth bar, sax players Candy,
Carline, Dorothy, Genevieve, and Virginia toot away in a call-
and-response pattern complemented by the trumpeters and by
trombonists Alyce, Daisianna, Janet, and May June.

Tess' and Barbara's guitars (and Julia's piano) add to the
strong rhythm, as do Terri's drums.

The third time in the call-and-response chain leads to
Julia's vocal:

JULIA

*Hey, everybody!/Let's have some
fun./You only live but once,/And
when you're dead, you're done.*

Another pattern here: In the verses, Julia's sung
exhortations stand alone while the instruments respond to
each line with two-note bursts.

INT. ROYCE HALL LOWER LEVEL - NIGHT

Bruce's and Ray's puzzlement increases when they realize this isn't Shirley and Lee's famous 1956 rocker; instead, Louis Jordan recorded this "Let the Good Times Roll" in 1946.

Ray grabs a video camera from his leather bag.

RAY
(standing up)
Y'all wanna start over? Ah wanna
catch this on tape.

INT. ROYCE HALL STAGE - NIGHT

Janet coaxes her flustered/surprised/puzzled/incredulous colleagues into cutting the music off.

CANDY
Ray...I don't mind wearing a
bikini, but don't make me play
nude!

TESS
And no funny stuff!
(pointing at Ray)
In fact, I wanna see this when it's
done.

MARGARET
Ray...why weren't you ready in the
first place?

RAY (O.S.)
At least Ah'm ready now!

The musicians watch Ray load his camcorder and aim it at the band. Several bandmembers shrug.

BETSY
We all better let Ray make his
little ol' video. Who knows...it
might work.

RAY (O.S.)
Wail...this is the MTV Age.

Betsy, Dorothy, and Tess mess up their hairdos to get that Cyndi Lauper/Madonna/Janet Jackson look.

EXT. BRUCE'S AND JANET'S HOUSE, BURBANK, CA - DAY

Janet's motorcycle rests in a different spot than usual.

INT. BRUCE'S AND JANET'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Bruce, Janet, Margaret, and Ray sit on anything they can find (sofa or chairs).

ON THE STEREO: An audio cassette of one of the Alexander/O'Keefe Band's practice sessions.

BRUCE

Well...you've really improved.

JANET

Bruce, we couldn't have improved that much in a week.

Bruce eyeballs Margaret and Ray.

BRUCE

She's only being modest.

(to Janet)

Listen to that. That's professional caliber. Instead of messing around with some amateur night, why don't you go straight to the professional jobs?

JANET

We still need polish. In fact, we need a whole paint--

RAY

Jan, look...Bruce and Ah wanna git mo' involved in your band.

Ray rises to see how much tape remains in the audio cassette that CONTINUES TO PLAY.

RAY (CONT'D)

That's why Ah'm shootin' a video of y'all.

Margaret and Janet nod.

MARGARET

Make sure it goes to Le Jubile, Ray. Not "Playboy."

Bruce kneels next to Janet.

BRUCE

Let me get some work for you. Heck, I'm not doing nothing right now.

Margaret, Janet, and Ray look surprised.

In fact, Janet looks touched.

JANET

Oh, Bruce...that's awful nice of you...but before you take on the duties of being our manager, you need...don't you think you ought to start reading some music magazines first?

Janet grabs a nonmusic magazine from off a table before she shows the magazine to Bruce.

EXT. LOS ANGELES ORPHEUM THEATER - NIGHT

This is a Jazz Age structure with a Gothic motif.

INT. LOS ANGELES ORPHEUM STAGE - NIGHT

The Gothic motif continues inside; the interior's a sea of red and gold...as if some USC athletic boosters had decorated the theater.

Janet leads the band through Pinetop Smith's "Boogie Woogie," Tommy Dorsey style.

The song's first seven bars belong to Candy (on flute this time), Kate (on string bass), and Terri (on drums)...who perform seven swirling, swarming bars.

Terri, Kate, and Candy give way to saxophonists Carline, Margaret (on tenor), and Virginia, and the clarinet duo of Dorothy and Genevieve; the quintet receive eighteen bars that pick up on the opening theme.

These eighteen bars pick up on the boogie theme...especially when the trombones (May June, Janet, Daisianna, and Alyce play them) underpin the woodwinds...only to play "responses" to the woodwinds' "calls."

Julia's twelve-bar piano solo gets the boogie going while guitarists Barbara and Tess enter the song.

Trumpeters Betsy, Sue Ann, and Gabrielle join Candy, Carline, Dorothy, Genevieve, Margaret, and Virginia in twelve rousing bars of call-and-response.

INT. LOS ANGELES ORPHEUM LOWER LEVEL - NIGHT

Ray watches the rehearsal through his camcorder while Bruce uses his boombox to record the music.

INT. LOS ANGELES ORPHEUM STAGE - NIGHT

Janet blows out three bass notes to end the twelve bars; her line leads to a five-bar, all-brass bridge.

Dorothy takes over with an eight-bar clarinet solo.

May June becomes the next trombone soloist...but the work of Candy and the saxophonists turns these eight bars into some call-and-response work.

Now Julia turns in some nice boogie work for four bars.

Seventeen musicians go after the four-bar bridge while the exception, Janet, runs offstage to get to the orchestra pit.

INT. LOS ANGELES ORPHEUM ORCHESTRA PIT - NIGHT

For the remainder of "Boogie Woogie," Janet leaves the trombone behind and pumps the pedals of the Orpheum's three-manual Wurlitzer pipe organ.

INT. LOS ANGELES ORPHEUM STAGE - NIGHT

It's Sue Ann, Gabrielle, and Betsy versus Candy, Dorothy, and Genevieve (musically, that is) for the next eight bars.

The trumpeters take over for another twelve bars; in these, Alyce, May June, and Daisianna turn in some strong, basslike trombone work.

With one bar left in this passage, Genevieve, Candy, and Dorothy toot their way back in...for just that one bar.

Alyce receives her own twelve bars...but Genevieve's and Dorothy's clarinets cut into Alyce's trombone work after each fourth bar.

These twelve bars also yield a more prominent guitar line by Tess and Barbara...and stronger organ work by Janet.

Alyce reprises the last two bars in her solo; she repeats the process twice.

And then...all the brasses slide into an ending that culminates in two sharp, brittle notes.

INT. LOS ANGELES ORPHEUM LOWER LEVEL - NIGHT

Bruce applauds as if he's got no tomorrow...and earns Ray's attention (video camera and all).

INT. LOS ANGELES ORPHEUM STAGE - NIGHT

With her bandmates in jubilation, Janet runs from the orchestra pit to the stage.

JANET
Great job, you guys!

The jubilation continues for every member now...with the exception of Margaret.

JANET (CONT'D)
Don't worry, Margie...you're gonna win the coin toss and conduct first pretty soon.

Margaret nods, then adds a grin.

JANET (CONT'D)
Remember, you guys: We're going to Le Jubile in twenty days. That means we'll need to have our sets down in a week.

Mild surprise grips most of the other musicians.

Margaret, Dorothy, and Alyce don't look surprised, though.

DOROTHY
It shouldn't be that hard. We've been rehearsing these tunes for a week.

SUE ANN
Easy for you to say, Dorothy. When you were a kid, you played in a rock-and-roll band.

ALYCE
Well, you can do it, too, Sue Ann. Just put your nose to--

DOROTHY
What do you think of this, everybody? Before going into that club three weeks from now, I figured: "Why not a little test show prior to Amateur Night?"

Now all of Dorothy's colleagues look surprised.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)

Well, before the Beatles could play Shea Stadium, they had to play all those dingy little pubs in England and West Germany.

BARBARA

(nodding)

Yeah, I see. Before you can play for strangers, you need to play for your friends first.

Some bandmembers nod in agreement.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

Back home in St. Louis, our neighborhood community center had a little repertory group...and we had to perform for our friends before we could do our thing for anybody else.

Margaret and Janet study Barbara.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

Our biggest booster was Waymon the Wino.

Candy's and Daisianna's mouths drop open.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

Every week we'd see him sprawled out behind some building on Delmar Boulevard--

DAISIANNA

Barbara--

TESS

No, ya gotta hear this, Daisianna. This story gets better.

MARGARET

Not right now.

Alyce puts a hand on Sue Ann's shoulder.

ALYCE

So you can see having a little test show sounds like a good idea.

Janet gets wind of Alyce's speech.

ALYCE (CONT'D)

We can see what sets work and--

JANET

Alyce...you took the words out of my mouth.

A surprised Alyce nods...while Dorothy seeks band attention.

DOROTHY

Anyway, I talked the principal at Marshall High into letting us play for the student body a week from this Friday.

The other musicians' surprise reappears.

MARGARET

And you didn't tell us.

The other musicians converge on Dorothy.

SUE ANN

Dorothy...you're lucky John and Paul aren't in high school yet.

JULIA

(to Sue Ann)

You don't live in Marshall High's district.

Dorothy tries to back off from her converging colleagues.

VIRGINIA

You realize what this means, Dorothy?

DOROTHY

The students get sixth period off!

Dorothy finds the relative comfort of the curtain.

INT. MARGARET'S AND RAY'S KITCHEN - DAY

Margaret's and Ray's kitchen also seems more like an eclectic mess...with major appliances and cabinetry that don't match.

The kitchen features a breakfast nook, though; Ray and Margaret sit there and eat breakfast.

MARGARET

Dorothy didn't even tell us.

RAY

You mean 'bout the little ol' show
down at John Marshall High School a
week from this Friday?

MARGARET

She wasn't talking about a drug
bust, I'll tell you that.

Margaret takes a swig of juice.

RAY

Wail, Margie, you oughta be tickled
t' death 'bout gittin' that gig.

Ray attacks his grits.

RAY (CONT'D)

You're actin' like an undertaker
that just found out a bunch of UCLA
professors had just discovered the
secret to eternal life.

MARGARET

I thought that was Bruce's job...he
just became the manager.

Now Margaret digs into her grits.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

And as insecure as he seems to be--

RAY

All the times he caught your band
on tape, you know he cain't be
insecure.

Ray takes a swig of juice.

RAY (CONT'D)

Just like Janet's agent Inez been
sayin' 'bout you and Janet. Only
now it's Dorothy takin' the bull by
the horns.

Margaret nods.

MARGARET

Yeah, Ray...but this bull's an
entire high school.

Margaret downs the last of her juice.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
 In fact, it's a pit bull.

Now Margaret jumps up and heads for the refrigerator...to grab another bottle/can/pitcher of juice.

RAY
 Margie--

MARGARET
 If you don't feed this pit bull something it can see on MTV or BET or VH-1, this pit bull will mangle you to death.

With the juice container in hand, Margaret returns to the breakfast nook...

RAY
 You've heard of Buster Brown shoes, ain'tcha?

...and pours herself some more juice.

MARGARET
 Would you like some more juice, Ray?

RAY
 (shrugging Margaret off)
 Their trademark's a little boy and a pit bull.

Margaret returns to the refrigerator to put the juice container away...

MARGARET
 And that pit bull's been turning on him ever since kids started buying shoes you have to pump up to wear.

...then returns to the nook, where Ray tries to drink her juice (only to abandon the idea when Margaret sits down).

MARGARET (CONT'D)
 I sure hope Dorothy's had her rabies shots.

Margaret grabs her juice glass to drink its contents.

EXT. JOHN MARSHALL HIGH SCHOOL, LOS ANGELES, CA - DAY

This is a sprawling, Gothic-styled, Depression-era structure in Los Angeles' Los Feliz neighborhood.

INT. JOHN MARSHALL AUDITORIUM - DAY

The seats are plush and the lighting is bright, effective.

The auditorium teems with STUDENTS; THE ENTIRE FACULTY assembles here, too. Not one seat is empty.

Bruce and Ray (dressed like Marshall High students) sit in the front row; the former has his boombox by his side and the latter has video equipment with him.

Among the actual students, the general tone seems to be: "This better be good...or else."

INT. JOHN MARSHALL BACKSTAGE - DAY

Dorothy, Janet, and Margaret try to get the swing band's other fifteen members fired up for the assembly. (All the musicians wear the dress-for-success look: Suits, ties, and slacks or skirts.)

DOROTHY

Come on, you guys. I know the sixth-period classes had the option of seeing the show or going home, but--

BARBARA

Why couldn't we have that option, too?

ALYCE

Barbara, don't you want us to be sharp for Amateur Night at Le Jubile?

Barbara nods.

JANET

Alyce...you took the words right out of my mouth.

MARGARET

Again.

Alyce shrugs while Barbara grins.

INT. JOHN MARSHALL AUDITORIUM - DAY

Onstage, the chairs, music stands, and instruments are set up the same way as at recent rehearsals...except a pedal steel guitar and an electric organ are part of the equipment, too.

All the bandmembers but Virginia, Janet, and Margaret are seated...and the three standees meet at center stage.

VIRGINIA
(flipping a coin)
Margaret...call the toss.

MARGARET
Tails.

It's tails, all right.

Virginia points to Margaret.

VIRGINIA
You've got the option.

MARGARET
Are you kidding? I'm gonna...play!

Janet and Virginia stare at Margaret in shock.

While Virginia goes to the sax section, Margaret walks to a center mike.

She waits for the crowd to get its AD LIBBED chatter out of its system, then:

MARGARET (CONT'D)
Thank you!

Margaret eyeballs her bandmates, then turns to the audience.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
How about a little bit of "Tiger
Rag" to get it started?

Alyce grabs an accordion and goes to center stage, where Tess and her guitar join Alyce. Janet goes to the trombone section while Margaret goes to the organ.

Dorothy runs to a studio piano while Julia runs to a grand piano. Genevieve grabs a soprano sax...and Barbara goes to the steel guitar.

With the other members on their usual instruments, Barbara launches "Tiger Rag" with one note; it sets up the brass players in a modulating four-bar intro.

Barbara's playing takes the band out of the intro and into the next eight bars...where her steel "calls" and the saxes "respond" while Kate comes up with strong two-beat bass.

Meanwhile, the students don't know what's hit them.

On the bandstand, four new bars feature the brasses playing "calls" and the steel playing "responses."

The second "verse" takes on the same theme (pedal steel, then woodwinds), except after four bars, the song changes keys.

The first four bars in this new key find the brasses leading and the steel guitar following.

After that, it's eight bars of Gabrielle's, Betsy's, and Sue Ann's trumpets luring May June's, Janet's, and Daisianna's trombones into a response.

Barbara's playing (it works in a way similar to Alvino Rey's "talking guitar") cuts the full twelve bars into thirds.

Another key change takes place; this time, the saxes, trumpets, and trombones drop out...and leave a stomping rhythm section (Alyce, Dorothy, Julia, Margaret, Terri, and Tess) behind the lead player, Barbara.

Before these eight bars can end, Betsy plays nine hot bars.

Now the brasses and reeds drop out in time for the vocal:

ALYCE, TESS

*Here, kitty kitty kitty kitty kitty
kitty kitty!/Here, kitty kitty
kitty kitty kitty kitty
kitty!/Here, pussy pussy pussy
pussy pussy pussy pussy!/Here,
kitty kitty kitty kitty kitty kitty
kitty!*

The vocal refrain is done in a rapid-fire style.

ALYCE, TESS (CONT'D)

*Here, kitty kitty kitty kitty kitty
kitty kitty!/Here, kitty kitty
kitty kitty kitty kitty
kitty!/Here, pussy pussy pussy
pussy pussy pussy pussy!*

Some of the teachers get a kick out of the vocal.

ALYCE, TESS (CONT'D)
Tiger's loose! Tiger's loose!

DOROTHY, JULIA
(singing, too)
*Get him! Slap him! Hold him! Keep
him!*

BARBARA, MARGARET
(also singing)
*Squeeze him! Scratch him! Stop him!
Skin him!*

ALYCE, DOROTHY, JULIA
*Pull him! Push him! Pound him!
Punch him!*

BARBARA, MARGARET, TESS
*Bite him! Fight him! Lick him! Kick
him!*

ALYCE, BARBARA, DOROTHY, JULIA,
MARGARET, TESS
*Bowl him over! Hold him down!/Drag
him all around the town!/Glad when
he's dead, the rascal!*

FULL BAND
Hold that tiger!

A few teens in the audience come to like this "Tiger Rag."

The band puts over one more key change. In it, the trumpets, trombones, and saxes roar their way through eight bars (the famous "Hold That Tiger" riff) while pedal steel contributes musical punctuation.

As Barbara and her steel trade riffs with the saxophones of Candy, Carlina, Genevieve, and Virginia for eight bars, things sound weird: Barbara and the horn players work offkey while the rhythm section stays in the right key.

Betsy's trumpeting jerks the whole band into the correct key.

After four bars of this, Barbara trades one-note passages with the brasses and reeds while the rhythm section stomps out the beat.

Seven bars later, "Tiger Rag" comes to a stomping, crashing end...and gains mild applause from the crowd.

SAME SCENE - A BIT LATER

The Alexander/O'Keefe Band tries another tack: A big-band version of "Soul Man," Ramsey Lewis style.

Tess' lead guitar provides a four-bar intro that's augmented by Terri's and Janet's drums; the next four bars mean Barbara's rhythm guitar and Kate's electric bass jump in.

Trumpeters Gabrielle, Betsy, Margaret, and Sue Ann; trombonists May June, Daisianna, and Alyce; and saxophonists Candy, Carline, Dorothy, Genevieve, and Virginia arrive for a seven-bar stay.

Now Julia comes in on grand piano (and plays sixteen bars of stomping riffs), only to have the horns drop out.

During Julia's solo, Margaret plays a tambourine with one hand and toots her trumpet with her other hand.

Before the first refrain comes up, Julia talks to the crowd.

JULIA
(into her mike)
Let me hear you sing the chorus!

AUDIENCE
*I'm a soul man! I'm a soul man!/I'm
a soul man! I'm a soul man!*

The horns come back to play the same exhortation the crowd sings as Julia pounds out a percussive backbeat on the 88s for sixteen bars.

The next sixteen-bar "verse" features a persistent baritone sax, Barbara's Motown-style rhythm guitar, and...rhythmic handclapping from some of the audience members.

The chorus kicks back in.

AUDIENCE (CONT'D)
*I'm a soul man! I'm a soul man!/I'm
a soul man! I'm a soul man!*

The third "verse" turns out to be a near carbon copy of the other two.

The next sixteen bars feature piano funk; the horn players respond with one-note lines.

Eight more bars take off on "Wade in the Water" and lead to "Soul Man's" eight-bar-long bridge, which then spawns a change in keys.

In the new key's first sixteen bars, bass, handclapping, and tambourine back up Julia's tremolo-filled playing.

As the song moves into a final chorus (and the horns play Motown-style guitar riffs), the band's got the students where it wants them.

AUDIENCE (CONT'D)

*I'm a soul man! I'm a soul man!/I'm
a soul man! I'm a soul man!*

Strong applause, most of it from the students, kicks in.

EXT. MARGARET'S AND RAY'S HOUSE, BURBANK, CA - DAY

Janet's motorcycle (Bruce is on it; he's in back of Janet) and Margaret's station wagon pull to stops out front.

Ray, Margaret, Janet, and Bruce (he takes off his helmet) get off or out of their vehicles...all smiles.

BRUCE

Ray, you got the tape?

RAY

Huh?

BRUCE

Ray...have you got the tape?

Margaret gestures the other three into the house.

INT. MARGARET'S AND RAY'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

While Bruce hangs on to his motorcycle helmet, Janet takes hers off at last and rests it at the nearest spot she finds.

JANET

Oh, Bruce, relax. He's got it.

Ray removes a videocassette from the leather bag and almost holds the videocassette inches from Bruce's eyes.

Bruce nods.

MARGARET

This calls for a celebration! Meet me and Ray at Le Jubile!

RAY

Yeah! Eight o'clock!

Janet and Bruce gesture their approval.

BRUCE
I can finally change my clothes!

EXT. LE JUBILE, LOS ANGELES, CA - NIGHT

Le Jubile is a jazz club inside a rather nondescript building north of the Santa Monica Freeway.

INT. LE JUBILE JAZZ ROOM - NIGHT

Inside, Le Jubile looks more like a French restaurant.

Except for a wall-size mural depicting Paris, the rest of the space is awash in red, white, and blue.

LOTS OF CUSTOMERS (30s to 60s in age) sit at the many small tables here.

CUSTOMERS of the same age range line the bar.

The audience pays real attention as it takes in the music of A JAZZ TRIO that performs on a big-band-size platform in front of the mural.

The jazz trio's music is powerful yet familiar.

Customer dress is conservative: Lots of suits, ties, tasteful dresses. Ray, Margaret, Janet, and Bruce just fit in tonight.

Ray stands erect as he addresses Margaret, Bruce, and Janet.

RAY
Be right back. Ah'm gonna find the manager.

Bruce, Janet, and Margaret nod; Ray, videocassette in hand as if it were Top Secret, strides to the bar, where he talks to a bartender named BERNADETTE (30s).

RAY (CONT'D)
Say, ma'am, where can Ah find the manager?

BERNADETTE
Is your drink too strong?

RAY
That ain't it a tall. It's about Amateur Night.

BERNADETTE
(nodding)
I see.

BERNADETTE (CONT'D)

(points toward bandstand)
He's at a table in front of the
bandstand...over by the door.

Ray nods and heads toward said table; as soon as Ray's direction is clear, Bruce follows him.

At that table over by the door in front of the bandstand, Ray and Bruce find the club's manager, PERVIS REED (50s, Black, a bit gregarious).

Bruce points to Ray while eyeballing a seated Pervis.

BRUCE

We understand you're the manager here.

PERVIS

(with a nod)
Yeah. What can I do for you?

Janet and Margaret spot Ray and Bruce; the two women go over to the three men, whose conversation continues.

Margaret and Janet put their hands on their husbands' hips.

RAY

Mah name's Ray Keithley, and mah partner's Bruce Thompson.

PERVIS

(standing up)
Ray and Bruce, it's nice to meet you. I'm Pervis Reed.

Pervis, Ray, and Bruce shake hands.

RAY

We heard your club's got a little amateur night, when new jazz acts git to git up there, and--

BRUCE

I'm the manager of a swing band that needs a chance.

JANET

(to Pervis)
Margaret and I are the leaders.

Pervis looks too stunned to speak.

MARGARET

I'm the same Margaret Alexander who was on "The Homesteaders," where I wrestled a bear one episode.

A still-shocked Pervis shakes Margaret's and Janet's hands.

PERVIS

Tell you what: Come into my office.

The three men and two women walk toward the office.

PERVIS (CONT'D)

A bear?

INT. PERVIS' OFFICE - NIGHT

The two bandleaders and their husbands surround Pervis' desk, where he sits.

Pervis' office features photo after photo of jazz acts and family members. And stacks and stacks of disorganized papers clutter the desk.

But a plant in one corner softens the office.

PERVIS

Boy, it takes all kinds. I didn't know you and Janet liked swing and jazz.

JANET

We sort of stumbled into it. Margaret got into swing when she learned conducting at UCLA, and I played it in high school.

PERVIS

Janet and Margaret, Ray and Bruce...I've only got a couple of seats.

RAY

That's okay, Pervis. Me and Bruce'll stay standing.

Margaret and Janet sit in the two chairs on the other side of Pervis' desk.

JANET

I had to to get through the
"Jennings Family" episode where
Joan Jennings replaced her drummer
brother in his big band.

Ray pulls out the videocassette of the band while Bruce gets
out an audio cassette of the aggregation.

RAY

We made a--

PERVIS

You two guys keep 'em. Over here,
we let the music speak for itself.

Bruce and Ray look surprised as they stuff their tapes inside
their suits.

PERVIS (CONT'D)

Margaret and Janet...why don't you
two bring your band over here on
January twenty-third...Tuesday
after next?

Janet and Margaret now look surprised.

PERVIS (CONT'D)

Eight PM.

The bandleaders' surprise becomes elation.

MARGARET

We'll do it!

Margaret and Janet shake Pervis' hand; a few seconds later,
Bruce and Ray shake his hand.

INT. LE JUBILE JAZZ ROOM - NIGHT

Margaret, Ray, Janet, and Bruce again sit at their own table,
where they listen to that jazz group.

The group's music changes to a jazz version of a late-1980s
rock tune...an action that perplexes the other listeners.

MARGARET

We're in trouble.

RAY

Margie, you gotta thank positive.

MARGARET

If that crowd doesn't like what that group's doing with Phil Collins' music, what...how do you think that crowd's gonna feel if we tried to do the same thing?

Margaret receives puzzled looks from Ray, Bruce, and Janet.

EXT. CONCERT HALL AT UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA-IRVINE - DAY
STUDENTS walk by the building on this cool, rainy day.

INT. UCI CONCERT HALL BAND ROOM - DAY

The Alexander/O'Keeffe Band sits in the now-familiar two-row setup. Janet's at one of the two drum sets; Margaret sits in the trumpet section.

Even the "THINK LE JUBILE" banner remains up.

Nobody plays a note.

Margaret steps out of the trumpet section and stops in front of the setup.

MARGARET

Janet and I went to Le Jubile last night.

Most of the musicians perk up upon Margaret's news.

TERRI

The people really do know their jazz...it should stand to reason, since it's one of LA's oldest and best jazz clubs.

Several heads nod.

TERRI (CONT'D)

I don't know if there's a Jazz Hall of Fame, but if there isn't, they should have it there.

MARGARET

Right.
(walking around)
At Marshall, we found a really good audience...

VIRGINIA

Once they got over their fear of music that doesn't sound like it came from a Casio.

Some of the performers crack up in laughter.

MARGARET

Yeah, Virginia, but they understand what we were trying to do. And they liked it.

GENEVIEVE

Did they have a choice?

BETSY

Genevieve...would you like it if ice cream came in only one flavor?

Genevieve looks confused.

MARGARET

No, the students didn't have to pay a cover charge.

(stops walking around)

But the crowd at that jazz club did. And while the students showed they liked our material, their grandparents may not.

Some of the musicians look too stunned to talk; others nod; still others are furious.

JULIA

I guess they're still trying to get over "Let Me Bang Your Box."

Most of Julia's colleagues look confused.

JULIA (CONT'D)

I'll sing it for you one of these days.

Janet stands up and sets the throne of her drum set aside.

JULIA (CONT'D)

One of the first songs my mom taught me.

JANET

So what we've gotta do is figure out some sets that'll turn those grandparents on.

CARLINE

Well, so much for "Don't Let Me Be Lonely Tonight."

Candy and Virginia try to console Carline.

EXT. KNBC-TV STUDIOS, BURBANK, CA - NIGHT

Parked cars rest within walking distance of this enormous white-and-gray Eisenhower-era building.

INT. "CHANNEL 4 NEWS" STUDIO - NIGHT

KELLY LANGE (52), COLLEEN WILLIAMS (34), and Grant sit at the anchor desk as tonight's "Channel 4 News" telecast continues.

KELLY

A couple of familiar faces from television are embarking on a new career, Colleen.

COLLEEN

Margaret Alexander, whom you viewers might remember from "The Homesteaders," and Janet O'Keeffe, who was one of the stars of "The Jennings Family," have started a swing band.

Grant and Kelly nod at Colleen.

COLLEEN (CONT'D)

And they'll be appearing at Le Jubile, at the corner of La Brea and Washington, on January twenty-third as part of the club's "New Talent Night." And to tell you more about it, here's Grant Moore, music critic for the "Los Angeles Times."

GRANT

Thank you, Kelly and Colleen...ladies and gentlemen, I've got just two words for the Alexander/O'Keeffe Band's upcoming appearance: Stay home.

Colleen's and Kelly's mouths fly open.

GRANT (CONT'D)

Put your money away. Stay home and watch NBC-4's fine Tuesday night lineup...I caught a rehearsal of the band recently. They make Count Basie and Benny Goodman turn over in their graves.

KELLY

Grant, let me stop you. What about that "Jennings Family" episode where Joan Jennings, O'Keefe's character on the show, filled in for her drummer brother in his big band?

COLLEEN

I watched that episode!

GRANT

Ladies...she was faking it.

Colleen wags a finger at Grant.

INT. BRUCE'S AND JANET'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

As Janet and Bruce sit and watch "Channel 4 News," their mouths fly open.

JANET

Bruce, he's lying! He's lying like one of those cheap floor mats they give you at that auto reconditioning place on Washington Boulevard--

BRUCE

Janet, calm--

JANET

I've still got the blisters to prove it!

Janet thrusts her hands toward Bruce.

JANET (CONT'D)

You know what makes it so bad? Grant had to unload on a night where John Beard had the night off!

BRUCE

Uh...huh.

JANET
He liked "The Jennings Family!"

Bruce slowly nods.

EXT. BRUCE'S AND JANET'S HOUSE - DAY

Margaret's station wagon rests in front of the house on this sunny day.

INT. BRUCE'S AND JANET'S BASEMENT - DEN - DAY

Margaret and Janet sit at the latter's upright piano, where they gesture Ray and Bruce into finding seats someplace.

The bandleaders arrange some tunes. When both women look as if they've got something, Janet and Margaret turn to Bruce and Ray.

The now-seated husbands look on with great expectations.

JANET
This is gonna burn your ears.

Janet and Margaret face the keys (or their sheet music) as they beat out a "Weird Al" Yankovic-style medley of swing versions of rock and R&B tunes of the 1949-1989 period.

The medley's "Weird Al" overtones (maybe they're Spike Jones overtones instead) pique Ray's interest.

RAY
Bruce, Ah thought they weren't gonna try this kinda stuff out on the crowd at Le Jubile.

BRUCE
Bands've been doing this for years.

RAY
Tryin' t' put gongs 'n' whistles in songs like "You Light Up Mah Life?"

BRUCE
(shaking his head "no")
That's not what I mean! Remember that swing album of Beatle hits?

RAY
Don't tail me.

Janet and Margaret head toward the end of their rollicking medley. When they finish, they receive strong applause from Ray and Bruce.

BRUCE

You know, you two oughta use that
in your act.

Ray pretends to cool his ears while Janet and Margaret nod.

JANET

Oh, Margaret, I thought we weren't
gonna try it...at least not in
front of paying customers.

Margaret shrugs.

BRUCE

And while you're at it, Jan and
Margie, you keep talking about your
agents. Why don'tcha invite 'em to
your next rehearsal?

Margaret gestures as if an alarm's gone off inside her head.

JANET

We really should.

MARGARET

Yeah...then we'll take my agent to
a restaurant where they serve crow.

Margaret strikes a chord on the piano.

EXT. ROYCE HALL AT UCLA - NIGHT

STUDENTS pass by on this cool, partly-cloudy night.

INT. ROYCE HALL STAGE - NIGHT

It's a hot rehearsal for the Alexander/O'Keefe Band, which brings Lionel Hampton's "Flying Home" to a spirited close.

In this version, Genevieve and Dorothy play clarinet while Margaret and Julia play piano (four hands, two pianos).

In the final thirty-two stomping bars, Janet's vibes and Sue Ann's trumpet trade screaming riffs a quarter of the way through before the whole band screeches out the next eight.

INT. ROYCE HALL LOWER LEVEL - NIGHT

Bruce, Ray, David, and Inez watch the band from front-row seats. Ray and Bruce catch the rehearsal on tape (in Ray's case, it's videotape).

INT. ROYCE HALL STAGE - NIGHT

Janet trades riffs with tenor saxophonist Candy for eight bars. Everything's staccato here...note for note.

The final eight bars involve the whole band; the last note is a drawn-out, three-second affair.

When this classic stomper ends, Bruce, Inez, and Ray offer lusty applause...but David is too stunned to react.

DAVID

Hey, Margie, are you gonna invite some network people to the club next Tuesday?

Janet and Margaret cover their ears.

MAY JUNE

(to David)

If they can quit worryin' 'bout one little ratings point for a while, then it'd be a mighty nice idea to invite 'em.

May June's remark cracks up some of the musicians.

JULIA

Thanks, David, but...they don't put variety shows on TV anymore.

DAVID

All right. I see your point.

JANET

David, since you're so worried about invitations, you're still welcome to come to Le Jubile next Tuesday at eight.

Janet fondles the vibraphone's mallets.

JANET (CONT'D)

See for yourself how we can do in front of a crowd of people who remember when couples had to touch each other in order to dance.

INT. ROYCE HALL LOWER LEVEL - NIGHT

Inez eyeballs David.

INEZ

You can bet I'm gonna be there.

DAVID

All right then, Inez Bautista. Just remember: When both of them get up there on January twenty-third and embarrass themselves, they're gonna embarrass you, too.

Bruce looks nervous, Inez tries her best to ignore David, and Ray looks exasperated.

INT. ROYCE HALL STAGE - NIGHT

Janet readies the charges to do another song.

JANET

(picking up a trombone)

How about "Slide, Hamp, Slide?" We got that down?

General agreement reigns among the bandmembers.

Virginia looks at David, then at her colleagues.

VIRGINIA

You guys...let's really burn Margie's agent's ears.

The band whoops it up.

EXT. LE JUBILE, LOS ANGELES, CA - NIGHT

On this special Tuesday, Margaret barely finds a place to park her station wagon.

INT. MARGARET'S CHRYSLER STATION WAGON - NIGHT

Margaret's still behind the wheel, even though the ignition is off. Ray gets out to go to the back to get his video equipment...only to realize something's wrong.

Ray comes back and taps on the window on Margaret's side. Margaret rolls the window down.

RAY

Margie...you wanna pop that back open?

MARGARET

Sure.

Still inside the car, Margaret punches a button to unlock the wagon's back door.

Ray opens the back door and grabs his video equipment.

But Margaret stays inside the car.

RAY

Ain't you comin' outa that car?

MARGARET

I will...but not until I'm all fired up.

RAY

Since when'd you become a method musician?

Ray closes the back door of the wagon.

RAY (CONT'D)

You realize you're playin' into David and Grant's hands by stayin' in that car?

Margaret rolls the window up.

INT. LE JUBILE ANTEROOM - NIGHT

The other seventeen members of the Alexander/O'Keefe Band assemble in a space that's one step better than a closet.

Janet, Betsy, Virginia, Barbara, Tess, Carline, Dorothy, Candy, Kate, Daisianna, Gabrielle, May June, Terri, Alyce, Sue Ann, Julia, and Genevieve engage in AD LIBBED chatter.

Tonight, the women wear a bewildering variety of clothing...from bikinis to T-shirts and jeans to low-cut gowns to tuxedos.

Bruce and Ray, dressed in suits, walk into the anteroom as if a friend had died.

BRUCE

Margaret isn't coming out.

RAY

Yet.

Some of the band's members look shocked; others look angry; still others cast nonchalant looks.

CARLINE

That doesn't sound like somebody who wrestled a bear on TV.

BETSY

Ah watched that show when Ah was little...the bear won.

Most members give Betsy a ho-hum reaction.

JANET

Let's get her. We've gotta play in nine minutes.

The rest of the band leaves the room in search of Margaret.

INT. LE JUBILE JAZZ ROOM - NIGHT

The room teems with CUSTOMERS...many 40s or older. Everybody sits at tables or at the bar.

Some customers stare at a platform that's set up for a swing band. The brasses, woodwinds, and guitars rest on stands...but the bandstand's empty of people.

David, Inez, and Todd sit at a table as close to the bandstand as possible.

TODD

I almost didn't make it here...I really had to do a job to talk my mom into letting John and Paul stay with her tonight.

David looks gleeful as he checks his watch and turns to Todd.

DAVID

Todd, you may have done all that work in vain...they should've been ready by now...I'll bet you they ankle.

Todd frowns.

DAVID (CONT'D)

They won't play tonight.

Inez works her own face into a frown, then addresses David.

INEZ

Fine, David. Why don't you go home?

David glares at Inez.

In the middle of the room, Heather (she totes a camcorder) and Howard sit together.

HEATHER

My boyfriend isn't able to come tonight...so I'm taping this for him.

HOWARD

Really nice of you.

(shakes Heather's hand)

And, Ms. Lookabaugh, it's so nice to meet you.

Grant walks inside the room. When he passes by Howard's and Heather's table, the twosome look up at him...and he stops in his tracks.

HOWARD (CONT'D)

Hey, Mr. Moore, if you didn't want anybody coming here to catch the Alexander/O'Keefe Band, what are you doing here?

GRANT

Well, uh...the "Los Angeles Times" sent me. My paper.

EXT. LE JUBILE, LOS ANGELES, CA - NIGHT

Led by Janet and Tess, the remaining musicians converge on Margaret's station wagon (Margaret's still in it).

Tess heads for the back while Janet takes the front.

TESS

Everybody! Start rocking the car!

All seventeen of Margaret's bandmates manage to put at least a hand each on the car; the women rock the vehicle when Margaret forces her way out at last.

The rest of the band continues to rock the wagon.

MARGARET

STOP IT!

Margaret's colleagues stop it at last.

GENEVIEVE

Margaret, ya know how much a one-way plane ticket from Noo Yock to LA cost me? My life's savings!

Margaret casts Genevieve an incredulous look.

GENEVIEVE (CONT'D)

Okay...a good chunk of it!

Margaret nods, then gestures the other bandmembers back into the club.

INT. LE JUBILE JAZZ ROOM - NIGHT

Margaret, Janet, and their band troop in through the front door. They can't find a single unoccupied chair.

Janet and Margaret themselves stand next to a table occupied by FOUR CUSTOMERS (all 30s)...who look up at the standees.

CUSTOMER #1

Hey, it's...it's...

CUSTOMER #2

(to Janet)

Aren't you Jennifer Jennings? From the "Jennings Family" show that used to come on Thursday nights?

MARGARET

(to Customer #2)

You mean Joan Jennings.

CUSTOMER #3

(to Margaret)

You're not Joan Jennings.

JANET

No. She played Abigail Jeffcoat on "The Homesteaders." I was Joan Jennings.

Four customer mouths fly open.

JANET (CONT'D)

Jennifer was the oldest sister...the one who collected other people's grease.

The four tablemates nod.

CUSTOMER #4
 (to Janet and Margaret)
 I didn't know you two liked jazz.

While Customer #4 whips out a pen and an autograph book, Pervis strides toward the bandstand to introduce the band, AD LIB style.

MARGARET
 Can we sign your book later? We've gotta get ready and take on our new roles.

Customer #4 nods...with a shrug.

SAME SCENE - A BIT LATER

The Alexander/O'Keeffe Band leaves the audience and jogs to the bandstand. While Margaret and Janet stop in front, the other members take their seats (in Kate's case, she gets next to her bass fiddle).

While the crowd applauds, Janet grabs a trombone and Margaret grasps a trumpet. Once the crowd quiets down:

MARGARET (CONT'D)
 Thanks, everybody!

JANET
 We're so glad you're here.

Janet and Margaret look at each other.

JANET, MARGARET
 Yes, indeed.

The band moves into Tommy Dorsey's "Yes, Indeed."

The song's first sixteen bars feature Janet's trombone, backed by Kate's upright bass, Terri's drums, and Tess' and Barbara's guitars.

Meanwhile, Margaret conducts the other musicians...and the customer enthusiasm turns into skepticism.

On the seventeenth bar, Margaret toots away...and so does the remainder of the band.

In this thirty-two-bar stay, Margaret and fellow trumpeters Betsy, Gabrielle, and Sue Ann drive home the melody while Janet and fellow trombonists Alyce, Daisianna, and May June maintain a basslike flow.

Clarinetists Dorothy and Genevieve join saxophonists Candy, Carline, and Virginia in filling in the gaps.

Meanwhile, Julia turns in some percussive piano work.

In the next eight bars, the sax/clarinet players mellow the song out...until:

FULL BAND
YES, INDEED!

After the shout, the tune swings again for six bars. The rhythm section gets the first bar, the trombones take the second bar, and the trumpets do the third bar. In the fourth:

FULL BAND (CONT'D)
YES, INDEED!

The rhythm crew takes the next bar and the trombone players do the sixth bar.

Now the brass/reed players clap to the beat and leave the instrumentation to Julia, Terri, Tess, Barbara, and Kate.

Also...the bandleaders go to center mikes and sing.

JANET
*Get to makin' with the jive,
girl./You shout when it hits you--*

MARGARET
Yes, indeed.

JANET
*Yes, yes, yes, you shout when it
hits you--*

MARGARET
Yes, indeed.

JANET
*When the spirit moves you, you
shout: "Hallelujah!"*

MARGARET
*(dancing to the beat)
I mean!*

Some of the patrons dig the music...others look confused.

SAME SCENE - A BIT LATER

Janet, without an instrument or a baton, leads the band into a racehorse version of "Sweet Georgia Brown," the way the International Sweethearts of Rhythm played it in 1945. (Janet's colleagues play the same instruments as before.)

After an all-band, eight-bar intro, Candy and her tenor sax take over.

Actually, the whole tune is a tenor sax solo; Candy's one-hundred-twenty-eight-bar spree honks, wails, grooves.

While Candy toots away, the sixteen other playing members musically battle to support her: First, the other reed players provide backing melody...only to get squeezed out by the rhythm section...which is drowned out by the brass players and the reed players.

The final thirty-two bars feature the whole band, with Candy honking her mates home to a bang-up, two-note end.

Even with all that, crowd applause is still pretty mild.

SAME SCENE - A BIT LATER

Despite a few newly-empty seats in the audience, band enthusiasm remains intact.

On "Caravan," that sixty-bar trumpet solo is now a duet between Sue Ann and Betsy. It's more like an improvisational tussle; in it, Janet and Terri play drums...while Margaret switches to clarinet to turn that section into a trio.

As Betsy and Sue Ann gain intensity, so do the supporting musicians.

SAME SCENE - A BIT LATER

Now the music's changed to "Mama Don' 'Low," where, during the last three blocks, Margaret, Janet, and Alyce play a variety of instruments (Alyce is at the second drum set while Janet and Margaret share a vibraphone or marimba)...and Barbara, Julia, Kate, Terri, and Tess play rhythm.

The next sixteen bars feature Alyce, Janet, and Margaret playing harmonicas...while reed players Virginia, Candy, Genevieve, Carline, and Dorothy maintain a good flow.

In the last block, it's Margaret on trumpet, Alyce on trombone, and...Janet on a toy sax. (At this point, the other brass players jump into the song.)

The ensuing eight-bar ending features Janet, Margaret, and Alyce as the lone instrumentalists; they trade riffs on acoustic piano, electric piano, and organ, respectively.

The applause is better this time...but not good enough to suit Margaret.

She gathers the rest of the band into a huddle.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Let's go to the last song in the book.

KATE

That one you stuck in there last week that you and Janet worked on?

GABRIELLE

Ah thought we weren't gonna do that one.

JANET

Oh, come on. It just might work.

Some of the musicians stare at Janet in utter disbelief.

JANET (CONT'D)

We went broke trying to get together. We might as well make this one count.

A few bandmembers nod at Janet.

JANET (CONT'D)

Let's prove Grant wrong about us.

MARGARET

And let's prove David wrong about us.

Margaret, Janet, and Co. cheer themselves hoarse.

SAME SCENE - A BIT LATER

Margaret, with no instrument this time, leads the band into that medley, which starts out with a few bars of "In the Mood..." only to move to a rocker from 1956 (without a change in the beat).

The other musicians (Janet's on organ this time) play to beat the Devil as they glide through some hits of the late 1950s.

Dorothy, Genevieve, Candy, Carline, and Virginia cook with riffs from some tunes from the early 1960s.

The crowd takes a liking to Janet's and Margaret's medley.

As the "In the Mood" beat continues strong, Alyce, Daisianna, and May June take over the ensemble work...on some songs from the middle 1960s.

At their table(s), Bruce, Inez, Ray, and Todd groove to the music. What's more, Bruce and Ray look surprised at the reactions of the customers around them.

On the bandstand, Margaret joins Terri on drums by going to the other set.

The twosome knock out the beat for twelve bars before Kate (on acoustic bass) helps guitarists Barbara and Tess put over some late-1960s rock songs, Glenn Miller style.

As the medley moves into the early 1970s, Kate changes to an electric bass...and Gabrielle, Sue Ann, and Betsy take over as the lead ensemble.

Julia and Janet move the medley into the middle 1970s with their strong keyboard work. In it, Julia plays lead on piano while Janet fills in the gaps on organ.

With the medley now into the late 1970s, the whole band takes the number through one final swinging chorus that sounds too free-wheeling to be formal.

The medley's last song gets an "In the Mood" type of ending.

At medley's end, the Alexander/O'Keeffe Band gets extremely strong applause...even from an astounded David.

While the applause continues strong, Pervis is all smiles as he runs to the bandstand. Margaret and Janet get up to meet him at center stage.

PERVIS

(to the audience)

Ladies and gentlemen, how do you
like the Alexander/O'Keeffe Band?

The applause heats up even more. In response, the two bandleaders wave at the crowd.

PERVIS (CONT'D)

Jan...Margie...great, great job!

JANET

Pervis, thanks so very much. Thanks for giving us this chance.

Now the applause dies down.

PERVIS

Have you got any plans for a week from this Saturday?

Janet and Margaret shake their heads "no."

PERVIS (CONT'D)

You've got some now, 'cause we want you to bring your band back here!

MARGARET

Thanks! You bet your life we will!

Janet gestures Margaret into bowing as the applause erupts again. Janet herself bows before Margaret gestures Ray and Bruce onto the platform.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Take a bow, you two!

Ray nods at Margaret while Bruce shrugs.

Bruce's shrug ends when Janet grabs his hand.

As the bandleaders and their hubbies link hands before taking some more bows, the band's sixteen other members reach center stage and take bows.

Grant and David reach center stage.

GRANT

Margaret...Janet...you got a minute?

JANET

What's up, Grant?

GRANT

I owe you one.

MARGARET

You sure do, Grant Moore.

GRANT

(nodding)

You're right...and I was just plain wrong about your band.

Grant extends his hands to the two bandleaders.

GRANT (CONT'D)
You two have got one heck of a band.

JANET
Well, uh...thanks.

GRANT
And, Janet...I was wrong to question whether you actually played drums in that "Jennings Family" episode.

MARGARET
(to Grant)
You should see her blisters.

Janet shows Grant her hands.

GRANT
Uh huh...got it.

Janet and Margaret shake hands with Grant.

GRANT (CONT'D)
Congratulations...and all the best to you. Knock 'em dead on February fourth.

MARGARET
Don't worry! We will!

DAVID
And I was wrong about you two bandleaders, too.

Margaret and Janet stare at each other, then at David.

DAVID (CONT'D)
The way your band played tonight, both of you would make George Segal proud.

MARGARET
Well...thanks, David.
(to Janet)
So much for moving to Pasadena, Texas.

JANET

You know...why don't we get the rest of the band together and we and you and Grant and Inez and our hubbies can go out to dinner?

The rest of the band now gathers around David, Grant, Janet, and Margaret.

DAVID

Sounds like a plan!

Now Todd, Ray, and Bruce join the happy throng.

DAVID (CONT'D)

I know a place where I can get the biggest piece of crow you can find in Southern California.

MARGARET

Okay! Just let us grab our instruments first!

FREEZE FRAME when David nods as he, Grant, and some bandmembers share in the goodnatured laughter.

FADE OUT.

THE END