INT. TRANSIT LOUNGE. AIRPORT - NIGHT
David HELFGOTT wakes with a start in an indistinct place somewhere in the world. Late thirties, eyelids at half-mast, he stares into the wet night, mesmerized by a flashing red light.

David (mumbling)
Kissed them all, I kissed them all, always kissed cats, puss-cats, kissed them, always did; if a cat'd let me kiss it, I'd kiss it - Cat on a fence I'll kiss it - always, always, I will - didn't I? I did because I was different wasn't I, I was - gotta be different again, haven't I darl -

He realizes the seat beside him is empty and panics.

David
Where-oh-where, Gillian? Where did she go, where-oh -

His weird begaviour draws attention.

Gillian (returning)
It's alright David, I'm right here.

David
Here - here Gillian, right here. The thing is I thought you were gone.

She emanates calmness, warmth and is an endless source of energy. The effect is instantaneous. David settles

Gillian
Where is there to go?

David
I don't know darling, I don't know, I'm hopeless without my glasses.

Gillian
You've got your contacts in, silly.

David
I'm a silly, it's true, it's true.

A braying laugh.
Whooahh!
Gillian
Shhhh.

David
Oooh, shhh - shhh, sorry darling, sorry -

Gillian
It's alright. Stretch your legs.

David
Do you think so? Perhaps I should, perhaps I should stretch my legs, should I stretch my legs?

He stands.

Gillian
Good idea.

David
Good idea, that's right -

AIRPORT ANNOUNCEMENT: Flight 313 to London via Frankfurt will be re-boarding in 15 minutes -

David
Whooahhh, London, Gillian, London!

Gillian
Yes Shhh.

David
Shhh

He looks out the rain-spattered window at the flashing red light from an aircraft being fuelled immediately outside the window.

David
Shhh, softly, softly, new story

Dissolve to iridescent neon raindrops coursing down a window in the night somewhere. Suddenly a desperate face fills the frame. It's David in his late twenties. The full head of hair, falling around his soaking wet face, tells us this is years earlier; a sodden cigarette hangs from his lips, spectacles dangle off the end of his nose. He's looking into ...
INT/EXT. MOBY'S WINEBAR - NIGHT

A pianist croons the last few bars of "Only the Lonely." A waiter, TONY, shows the last two patrons to the door. TONY and a woman in her mid-forties, Sylvia, put up chairs; the PIANIST, SAM, slips into a stool at the bar. They chat but all we hear is David's anxious breathing as we are seeing it all from his POV. He raps on the window.

Sylvia
What does he want?

Sam
A drink probably. Get lost!

David disappears from the window and appears at the door.

Sylvia
Poor thing. Let him in.

Tony
He's a derro!

Sylvia
He's saturated.

Resume David's POV as more words are exchanged then TONY comes over and opens the door to him.

Tony
What's the problem, mate?

David
(a hundred miles an hour)
Sorry, sorry, sorry, mate, I'm the problem, I think I'm the problem, such a problem. And wet! But it's not an ideal world. Is it an ideal world? We just have to make the most of it, I mean, this is the way we find it isn't it, yeah-yeah-yeah! But it's more ideal than it was, I mean, you know, we're privileged, we're privileged, we're priviliged, aren't we, because not long ago, people would be burned to a steak wouldn't they, er?

He sees MOBY'S embroidered on TONY's tunic.

David
Moby, yay Moby, pleased to meet you -
Tony
Tony. Who are you?

David
(hugs Tony)
Tony, Tony not Moby Tony. Who am I Tony? Who knows Tony? I don’t know myself. Whooahh! David, I’m David, I’m David
Tony How does that sound?

Sylvia
Hello David. How can Sylvia help?

David
Sylvia? Is it Sylvia? How are you Sylvia? Good to see you, Sylvia.

He throws an arm around her neck as though greeting a long-lost friend.

David
Sylvia Tony, Tony Sylvia.

Sylvia
What can we do for you, David?

David
Do for me, Sylvia, what, yes, got to stop talking, got to stop, got to stop, it’s a problem isn’t it? Is it a problem?

Sylvia
It’s alright David; just tell Sylvia why you’re here.

David
Ahhhh! Well it’s a mystery, a mystery, a mystery -

Sylvia
Are you lost?

David
Am I lost? Perhaps that’s it. I’m lost, I’m lost, I’m lost. How does that sound?

He sees the piano.

David
Ooh you have a piano. Is that your piano, Sylvia? Beautiful Sylvia,. Isn’t Sylvia beautiful Tony? You too

Sam
Like hell baby.

Sylvia
Shut up, Sam.

David
(lurches towards SAM)
Hell baby, the Devil, Diablerie Sam baby!
SAM
Get outta here.

TONY is in fits of laughter

Sylvia
David -

David
Sylvia, such a beatiful piano exquisite Sylvia, Sylvia-Tony.

He moves towards it.

David
Could I play, you say, you say?

Sylvia
Why don't you tell Sylvia where you live?

David
Live, Sylvia, ligve - live and let live - that's very important isn't it? Molto, molto. But then again it's a lifelong struggle, isn't it Sylvia-Tony, to live, to survive, to survive undamaged and not destroy any living breathing creature. The point is, if you do something wrong you can be punished for the rest of your life so I think it's a lifelong struggle; is it a lifelong struggle? Whatever you do it's a struggle, a struggle to keep you head above water and not get it chopped off. I'm not disappointing you am I Sylvia-Tony-Moby-Sam, yay Sam!

EXT. STREETS - NIGHT
Sylvia's old Humber belts past in the heavy rain.

INT. Sylvia'S CAR - NIGHT
TONY is driving. Sylvia is in front, both laughing along
with David in the back.

David
(a braying laugh)
\textcolor{red}{Helfgott - with the help of God - that's what it means}
Sylvia. How's that? You see, Daddy's daddy was religious,
vee-eery religious, very strict; and a bit of a meanie. But
he got exterminated, didn't he, so God didn't help him.
Whooahhh. Not very funny is it, Sylvia? Very sad, really
sad - I'm callous aren't I, such a meanie because I haven't
got a soul, is that right - that's right isn't it?

Sylvia - (O.S.)
What do you mean?

David
Daddy, daddy said so. No such thing as a soul.

A train whiste sounds in the distance.

Sylvia
That's ridiculous

David
Ridiculous; you're right. I'm ridiculous Sylvia-Tony, and
callous Daddy said because it was a tragedy, a tragedy

The car drives into a tunnel. Blackness in the tunnel.

David - (V.O.)
\textcolor{red}{a ridiculous tragedy.}

The sound of the train wheels rattling, blasting a signal
sweeps us into bright light.

INT. OLD HALL - DAY
As if in a dream, children's faces turn to look at camera in
soundless slow-motion. Some are made up, prissy, perfectly
dressed for a performance, accompanies by stage mothers,
fanning themselves in the stifling heat, all eyes focused on
the next contestant as he makes his way up the centre aisle.

His POV. Over this we fade up.

ANNOUNCER
Let's hear it for our next young contestant, David Helfgott.
David, nine, makes his way down the aisle clutching a score. His hair is meticulously parted and he wears spectacles. A little uncertain, he stops and looks back to his father. Peter HELFGOTT is a thickset Polish man in his fifties. He motions for David to keep going, then sits, anxious and excited. David walks up some steps onto the stage.

Announcer
David's going to play the piano for us, aren't you David?

David
Yes.

He's stage-struck by all those faces looking at him, including three judges - two elderly females and a man in his thirties. His name is BEN Rosen.

Announcer
What are you going to play?

David's attention is taken by a fan nearby, blades whirring.

Announcer
David, what are you going to play?

David snaps out of it, when from the audience

Peter
(stands)
Chopin! The Polonaise!

Peter smiles full of charm, and a little embarrassed at all eyes on him; he applauds encouragingly then sits. David's heels click on the bare boards as he crosses to the old upright piano centre-stage. HE adjusts his music. His bony legs barely reach the pedals. HE difgets, looks into the spotlight. He takes a deep breath, then launches into Chopin's Polonaise in A Flat, the first few bars ring out with unusual power, surprising everyone - BEN Rosen in particular.

David attacks the keys with such gusto that the piano inches forward. HE hooks his foot around the leg of the stool and drifts in. He plays on. The piano moves again. He blurs some notes. Again he readjusts the stool without missing a beat; pages of his score flutter to the ground but David plays on, undaunted, to the end. Rosen watches the courageous performance with wry amazement. Peter arrivals
backstage flustered. To the ANNOUNCER:

Peter
The piano, it is disgraceful.

The piano slews forward. David stands and plays the final few bars with awesome intensity.

Announcer
This kid’s good; he’s great.

A moment.

Peter
He’s my son!

EXT. HELFGOTT HOUSE - DAY
The expectant faces of two young girls loom large as they look down the street from their perch in a tree – Margaret, 12, and SUZIE, 5.

Suzie
Did he win or lose?

Along the street, David walks a few paces behind Peter.

Margaret
He lost.

David jumps over the cracks in the pavement.

Margaret
Now we’ll all cop it. Damn you David Helfgott.

INT. HELFGOTT HOUSE - DAY
Peter broods, his mind turning over. A scratch recording of Rachmaninoff’s Third Piano Concerto plays on the gramophone. David moves a chess piece and waits for Peter.

RACHEL HELFGOTT, Peter’s wife, lights the woodstove. Her face, once beautiful, is now blanketed by the gollow look of years of submission. Margaret is doing homework on the kitchen table.

David
It’s your turn, Daddy.

Peter flicks a look at the board and moves a piece.
Peter
You know, David, when I was your age, I bought a violin, I saved for that violin, it was a beautiful violin. All listen to the story they've heard before. Do you know what happened to it?

David glances at a photo of a stern rabbi high up on the wall.

David
He smashed it.

A moment, the Peter slams his fist on the small table, knocking some chess pieces off.

Peter
You are a lucky boy. MY father never let me have music.

David
I know, Daddy.

Peter
You are very lucky.

David
Yes Daddy.
(lights up.)
Will I play for you?

Peter
No. You pick up these pieces.

David proceeds to on hands and knees while Peter goes to switch the gramophone off.

Margaret
(to David)
I bet I could've won.

Peter
(in Yiddish)
Quiet.

David pokes a face at Margaret. She does the same to him, careful for Peter not to see. David gallops the knight across the board. There's a knock at the frond door. Margaret makes to go.

Peter
Margaret!

She stops.

Peter
I told you, tell your friends not to come.

She sits. There's another knock which Peter ignores.

EXT. HELFGOTT HOUSE. SIDEWAY - DAY
BEN Rosen walks around the sidewalk of the dilapidated old house, uncertain if there's anyone home. He spots someone in the backyard.

Rosen
Hello.

It's SUZIE.

SUZIE
Hello.

Rosen
Who are you?

INT/EXT. HELFOYY HOUSE. BACKYARD - DAY
Peter looks across.

SUZIE - (O.S.)
Daddy, there's someone here.

Rosen appears at the back door.

Rosen
I hope I'm not interrupting.

Peter stands in the doorway looking down at him, resenting the intrusion.

Rosen
Ben Rosen. I was one of the judges.

Peter doesn't accept the proffered handshake. He motions SUZIE in.

Peter
(to Rosen)
Yes?

Rosen
You left before all the prizes were announced.

David appears behind Peter.

Rosen
You were very good this afternoon, David.

David
Thank you.

Peter
He can play better.

Rosen
Maybe he was a little too good. Some people don't like that. We gave him a special prize for his courage.

Peter takes the envelope from Rosen and peels it open. Margaret starts playing the piano in the background.

Rosen
It was a very difficult piece you chose, David.

David
Daddy chose it.

Rosen notices RACHEL sneak a look out the window at him.

Rosen
Even great pianists think twice before tackling the Polonaise.

David's eyes light up as Peter takes a pound note from the envelope.

Peter
A prize for losing!

He pockets the money.

Rosen
I wouldn't call him a loser.

Peter
(in Yiddish, to Margaret)
Stop, that is enough!

She stops playing.
Rosen
(in Yiddish)
She plays well too.

The Yiddish catches Peter out.

Peter
(disdainful)
They all play.

Rosen
I'm quite sure David could win lots of competitions with the right tuition.

He offers a business card showing his qualifications.

Peter
I teach him.

Rosen
You've obviously done well.

Peter
Yes - and no one taught me; no music teachers Mr. Rosen.

Rosen
Of course, it's just that a few bad habits can sometimes mean the difference between winning or losing.
He knows which strings to pull.
If you'd like to think about it.

He hands Peter the card. Peter holds his look and closes the door on him.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE HELFGOTT HOUSE - NIGHT
The house is in darkness

INT. HELFGOTT HOUSE - NIGHT
In the bedroom Peter wakes to the sound of the piano filtering through from the living area.

He walks down the hallway, drawn by the sparse, haunting music which is familiar: Rachmaninov's Third Piano Concerto.
Entering the living area he sees David playing the piano in near darkness. David struggles to get his small fingers across the keys, faltering to a stop

Peter
Rachmaninov?
David
It's beautiful.

Peter sits beside his son.

Peter
You taught yourself?

David
From the record.

Peter
The record?

David
You always play it.

Peter smiles.

Peter
It is very difficult, the hardest piece in the world, David.

David
Will you teach me?

Pause. Peter deflects.

Peter
One day you will play it, you will make me very proud.

Peter hugs his small son.

Peter
Next time, what are we going to do?

David
WE're going to win.

Peter
We're going to win!
(Kisses him.)
Now go to bed.

David
Goodnight, Daddy.

Moments later Peter takes a score from a battered suitcase full of music: Rachmaninov's Third Piano Concerto. IT's
awesome in its complexity, page after page. Peter positions it on the piano, then contemplates the keys with his own thickset, clumsy hands. The framed photo of the rabbi looks down at him. Peter clenches his fists in frustration.

EXT. BEN Rosen'S HOUSE - DAY
David and Peter walk along a cobbled path. David stops to look at some goldfish in a large pond. Peter bustles him along to the frontdoor of the house. RAIN threatens. Peter rings the bell. David smiles and goes to do the same but Peter stops him with a look.

The door is opened by Rosen.

Peter
I have decided I would like you to teach David.
(Hands him some music.)
This!

Rosen
Rachmaninov? Don't be ridiculous.

Peter
He can play it already.

Rosen
He's just a boy. How can he express that sort of passion?

Peter
You are a passionate man, Mr. Rosen. You will teach him, no?

Rosen
No. I'll teach him what I think is best.

David is entranced by some chimes hanging over his head.

Peter
Rachmaninov is best.
(No response.)
But you are his teacher; I let you decide.

Rosen
(dry)
Thank you. We'll start with Mozart.

He lets David in and Peter goes to follow but the door is already closing on him.
Peter
I can't afford to pay.

The door shuts, leaving Peter stranded. It starts to rain. The sound of scales issues from inside.

INT. Rosen'S HOUSE - DAY
David plays the scales. Rosen spots Peter at the side window, peering in. Rosen shuts the blind on him.

EXT. Rosen'S SIDEWAY - DAY
Peter, in the raid, presses his ear to the window. The sound of thunder advanced from:

EXT. LODGE. NIGHT. - THE PRESENT
Heavy rain. Sylvia's car pulls up. She jumps out and opens the back door.

Sylvia
Come on David, Sylvia's getting wet.

She drags him out.

David
Wet Sylvia, sorry Sylvia, such a wet.

They run past a sign clanging on a chain: 'Eden Lodge'.

INT. David'S ROOM AT EDEN LODGE - NIGHT
Sylvia is appalled by what she sees. The room is littered with sheet music, rubbish, cigarette butts.

Sylvia
Is this your room, David?

David
It's a room, it's a room, home sweet home.

She looks at the piano - a battered honky-tonk, chipped keys all burnt by cigarettes.

Sylvia
You can play?

David
Kind of, kind of play kind of sweet kind Sylvia.
(Picks up sheet music.)
Chopin, Sylvia, Chopinezee! The Pole-popolski. Like Daddy and his family before they were concentrated.
He brushes a Rachmaninov score aside.

Sylvia
How long have you been here?

David
Golly, I don't know. Aeons I think, a few years, a few.
And Schubert, nothing wrong with Schubert except syphilis,
was it syphilis? I think it was. Then he got typhoid on
the end of him wasn't it? We lost
him -

Shenotices a row of tablet bottles by the bed.

David
That was a bit careless wasn't it Sylvia - Whooah we lost
him, we lost him, didn't live to swim another day.

MINOGUE enters; late fifties, he has a thick Scottish accent
and a suspicious look in his eye.

David
Him. I was a naughty boy wasn't I? Was I a naughty boy?
Chop chop, off with the head.

Minogue
I was about to send out a search party.He shuts the window.

David
Whooahhh, a search party Jim, a party! I won't be invited
again, will I Sylvia?

Sylvia
He showed up at my restaurant, seemed a bit lost.

David
How's that Sylvia, how's that? A party! A celebration. A
fiesta - !

Minogue
He's good at that. Thank you for bringing him back.

Heushers her out.

David
Time for a wine and a very fine time. A mardi gras and a
nice long cigar - Whooah Jim Jim Jim, a party.
He realizes he's on his own. He stares blankly at the rain hitting the window, getting louder until it becomes the sound of applause, from:

INT. CONCERT HALL. DAY - THE PAST
Rows of enthusiastic clapping hands.

PRESENTER - (V.O.)
The winner and State champion, David Helfgott.

As the wild applause continues, we end on a big close-up of David as he comes up from a bow, now a young adolescent. Several years have passed.

INT. HELFGOTT HOUSE. - DAY
SUZIE
He won! David won!

Margaret
I can hear that. I'm not deaf.

RACHEL nurses baby LOUISE.

RACHEL
That's your clever brother.

INT. BACKSTAGE OF HALL - DAY
Peter bursts through the door, rushes up to Rosen and kisses him on both cheeks.

Peter
We won. We won.

Rosen
Thanks to Mozart.

Peter
Now he can play Rachmaninov.

Rosen sighs. David takes centre stage. Peter watches from the wings with Rosen and the other contestants.

PRESENTER
And now to present David with the prize money, our very special guest from America, ladies and gentlemen, currently on tour in Australia - Isaac Stern.

STERN shakes hands with David. Peter applauds vigorously, overwhelmed with excitement.
Peter
He's my son!

STERN
(to David)
You have a very special talent, David.

David
Thank you, thank you Mr. Stern. So do you.

Laughter.

STERN
How much are you prepared to give to your music, David?

David
How much?

Peter
(from the wings)
Everything.

Rosen settles Peter.

David
Everything. But I do like tennis - and chemistry too.

Laughter. Peter laughs too.

STERN
Do you play tennis as well as you play Mozart?

David
Only against the wall at home, I bounce the ball against the wall mainly.

STERN
How would you like to come to a special school in the States where music bounces off the walls?

David's imagination is captured.

David
America?

STERN
Land of the Free. Home of the Brave! You know?
Peter's expression falters.

PRESENTER
Ladies and gentlemen, what an honour for our young state champion to be invited to study in America.

The audience applauds. People congratulate Peter.

Rosen
That's fantastic, Peter.

Peter applauds enthusiastically despite the uncomfortable feeling he is yet to fully understand. David beams into the audience, soaking up that winning feeling.

Fade to white:

SUZIE'S VOICE: 'And now, all the way from America, David Helfgott.'

EXT. HELFGOTT HOUSE. BACKYARD - DAY
David steps out form behind the bright white sheets hanging on the line and bows repeatedly to an imaginary audience.

Margaret
He's not from America.

She takes the washing off the line. The yard is crammed with empty bottles and scrap metal.

SUZIE
He's going to America and when he comes back he'll be coming from there, won't you David?

David bows still, until Margaret unpeggs the sheet.

SUZIE
Aren't you going to miss him?

Margaret
Yes.

David smiles as he realizes she means it.

David
Me too.

Youth's voice
Margaret.
Margaret puts the washing down and exits the back gate.

INT. HELFGOTT HOUSE. KITCHEN - DAY
Peter
I have no money to send David to America.

Rosen
We'll raise it.

Peter scoffs. RACHEL looks over from the sink where she's scraping marrow from bones into a pot.

Rosen
Bar mitzvah.

Peter
What?

Rosen
David hasn't had his bar mitzvah.

Peter looks out the window.

Peter
Religion is nonsense.

Rosen
It's also a goldmine if you know where to dig.

EXT. HELFGOTT HOUSE. BACKYARD - DAY
David
One day I'll play with an orchestra.

SUZIE
Can I come when you do?

David
You can ride with me in my cadillac.

SUzIE
Where are you going to live in America?

Behind them, Peter steps out of the kitchen.

David
With a nice Jewish family they said.

Peter
And this is not a nice family?

David
Oh yes, very nice, very -

Peter
You are very lucky to have a family!

He stabs a look at the abandoned laundry baskey - no sign of Margaret.

EXT. HELFGOTT HOUSE. REAR LANEWAY - DAY
Peter's face appars over the rear corrugated iron fence which has a strand of barbed wire running across the top. In the laneway Margaret is talking to a GANGLY YOUTH. Seeing Peter she pales.

Margaret
I have to go.

She hurries to the gate. When she opens it, Peter is there. She squashes past him, his eyes burning through her.

INT. HELFGOTT KITCHEN - DAY
Rosen
It's one of the finest music schools in the world.

RACHEL
It is for his father to decide.

Rosen
David will be well looked after, I assure you.

RACHEL nods politely, unconvinced.
Pause.

Rosen
(Perplexed, steps closer)
Rachel, David could well be one of the truly great pianists.

RACHEL
He is just a boy, Mr. Rosen. He still wets the bed.

Rosen absorbs this. Margaret fumes past.

EXT. STREET - DAY
A rickety pram wheel wobbles along. Widen to reveal Peter pushing the dilapidated old pram down the ordinary suburban street, flanked by David and SUZIE wearing grubby school
uniforms.

Several kids playing hopscotch stop as they see them approaching, then clear a path for the odd trio to pass. SUZIE looks down her nose at them. David performs the hopscotch without missing a beat as the trio continues on its way. The kids watch after them, like they were from another planet.

Wide shot. David and SUZIE collect several bottles which have been left on the sidewalk, put them in the pram and walk on with Peter.

EXT. HELFGOTT HOUSE. BACKYARD - DAY
Peter straddles a large piece of scrap metal - the head of a truck engine - and heaves it off the pram with a great sense of satisfaction. It joins a pile of metal and a stack of empty bottles in the corner of the yard.

Peter
You see how fit I am, you see how strong?

SUZIE
Show me Daddy, show me where the lion scratched you when you worked at the circus.

Peter extends his hand with a sense of theatricality to reveal a long, jagged scar.

Peter
That's what happens when you get too close to the bars.

He stands in a body-builder pose, barrel-chested.

Peter
Come on David, hit me.

Suzie
Me!

Peter
David, as hard as you can.

David
Okay. Here comes. Ready.

David's punch bounces off Peter's stomach.

SUZIE
My turn Daddy.

Peter
Harder. Come on!
(David punches again.)
You see. A man of steel.

David
Steel alright.
(Rubbing his fist.)

Peter
No one can hurt me! Because in this world only the fit survive.

RACHEL watches from the laundry, sweating over the hot copper; she sees another side to the fun and games.

Peter
The weak get crushed like insects. Believe me, if you want to survive in America you have to be fit and strong, like me.

INT. SYNAGOGUE. OFFICE CORRIDOR - DAY
An elderly receptionist types with one finger on an antiquated typewriter. Peter sits in the narrow corridor, arms folded tightly. He would rather be somewhere else. On the wall opposite him a long line of faces - the portraits of past rabbis of the synagogue stare down.

Peter glances at the folded newspaper on the seat next to him: The Maccabean. On the front page - a photo of David seated at the piano with a smiling Peter, pointing at a score as if taking David through a lesson.

The elderly typist removes the sheet from the typewriter and smiles at Peter. He nods politely, then resumes his steely composure. The door to the RABBI's office opens. Peter stands.

RABBI
(exits the office with David)
See you next week David, and don't forget to study.
(He hands him the 'soncino chumash'.)
We'll see you in Schul, Elias.

Peter feigns a polite smile.

David
Thank you Rabbi.

They walk off. David takes The Maccabean from him, noting the stand displaying more copies of this latest issue. Peter puts his arm on David's shoulder, draws him in, as if protecting him from an invisible foe. The RABBI considers it, then goes back into his office.

EXT. BEN Rosen'S HOUSE - DAY
The POSTMAN rides along the street, past David waiting expectantly at his front gate. No mail today. David watches after him, sighs.

INT. BOKSER MANSION - NIGHT
A chandelier glistens above the entry. David and Peter enter tentatively. The foyer is dripping with dignity and provincial social elite. David and Peter are immediately set on by the hostess, MRS. BOKSER, a busy socialite.

MRS. BOKSER
Mr. Helfott, it's exciting isn't it? David, the Lord Mayor's dying to meet you.

She takes David by the hand, dragging him away. A WAITER offers Peter a drink from a try but Peter's attention is on David being whisked away.
Cut to a short while later. Faces glowing with appreciation and sparkling jewellery surround David.

MRS. Bokser
And I would like to thank our wonderful Lord Mayor for establishing this fund for David to go to America. (Applause.)
And now to play for us, our very own David Helfgott.

Rosen notes Peter's embittered look around the room as the gathering smothers David with affection on his way to the piano - a shake of the hand, a kiss, etc.

EXT. HELFGOTT HOUSE - NIGHT
Peter's voice can be heard raging inside.

Peter - (V.o)
These people are a disgrace!

INT. HELFGOTT HOUSE. GIRL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT
SUZIE nestles up to Margaret and baby LOUISE, frightened by the yelling.
Peter - (V.O.)
A disgrace.
(A loud thump.)
They think they are so important.
(Curses in Yiddish.)

INT. HELFGOTT HOUSE. LOUNGE - NIGHT
Peter paces, like a caged lion, bursting with anger.

Peter
What do they know with their furs and their diamonds? It makes me sick to the stomach.

RACHEL is on the receiving end.

Peter
And Rosen. Pah!

INT. David'S ROOM. NIGHT - NIGHT
David lies in bed listening.

Peter - (V.O.)
What kind of man is he? He has no children. He's not married, I know! Don't talk to me about Rosen.

INT. HELFGOTT HOUSE. LOUNGE - NIGHT
Peter curses again in Yiddish.

Rachel
He only wants for David the same as you have always wanted.

Peter
Don't ever compare me to him. What has he suffered? Not a day in his life! What does he know about families? Do you forget how your sisters died?

He thumps the wall by he photograph o RACHEL and her sisters.

Peter
And my mother and father.
(Yiddish.)
Stupid woman. Stupid!

Cut to later. Peter sits in near darkness, just staring it seems. We realize he is looking at a scrapbook, articles and photos of David throughout his brief but stunning career, including a photo with Isaac Stern.
Peter stares, his mind turning the same thing over and over.

INT. David'S BEDROOM - NIGHT
David is asleep. A shadow falls across him. It's Peter. He comes over and stands there, burdened, watching over his sleeping son. He kisses David lovingly on the forehead.

INT. AUSTRALIA-SOVIEET SOCIETY. MEETING ROOM - NIGHT
David bows to warm applause.

SECRETARY
Thank you Comrade Helfgott; your son is a credit to you.

Peter proudly puts his hand on David's shoulder. On the wall there's a communist flag and a Stalin portrait. The gathering consists of 25 people, members of the society. One woman, in her mid-seventies, warmly applauds her appreciation of David's talent.

Cut to later. Cocktails are being served. Peter is involved in a discussion. He looks around for David. No sign.

INT. THE SOCIETY READING ROOM - NIGHT
David takes a book from the shelf - it's on Russia. A GIRL, about 17, stares at him through the shelves.

GIRL
You play beautifully.

David
Thank you.

GIRL
My name is Sonia.

David
I'm David.

SONIA
I know who you are.

She laughs; so does David. He's quite taken.

SONIA
You have the most wonderful hands.

He looks at his hands, like he'd never noticed. Then looks at hers.
David
So do you.

She smiles warmly.

SONIA
You're going to America?

David
That's right.

Sonia
Perhaps one day you will go to Russia too.

David
Yes. Why not?

Peter - (O/s)
David.

David puts his hands in his pockets.

David
Right here.

Peter gives SONIA a charming smile.

Peter
Excuse us. There is someone important who wants to meet you, David.

INT. THE SOCIETY READING ROOM - NIGHT
We recognize the woman from above - KATHERINE SUSANNAH PRICHARD. Her face reflects a sharp intelligence and strong humanity.

Katherine
I've never met anyone who plays the piano as beautifully as you, David.

David
And I've never met a writer before, Mrs. Prichard.

KATHERINE
You must be very proud of him.

Peter
As proud as a father can be.
KATHERINE smiles.

KATHERINE
I have a long-suffering old piano at home.

Peter
A suffering piano?

Katherine
From neglect. Perhaps you'd come and play it for me, David?

Peter goes to speak, but David interrupts.

David
Oh yes, anything to help.

Katherine
I'd like that very much.

David
Me too.

SECRETARY - (O/S)
Your attention Comrades. I wish to propose a toast to our founder -

Katherine
That's my cue. Excuse me.

SECRETARY
- and very special guest this evening, Katherine Susannah Prichard.

Peter applauds along with everyone else.

Peter
You will learn much from this old woman, David. She has been to Soviet Union.

As KATHERINE joins the SECRETARY up front, she smiles at David.

Peter
(Nudges David)
Smile. Look happy.

EXT. HELFGOTT HOUSE - DAY
David hurries out the front door excitedly at the sound of
the POSTMAN's whistle. The POSTMAN finds a letter for David in his satchel and holds it away before playfully dropping it into the letter box. David grabs it and registers where it's come from.

David
America!

INT. HELFGOTT HOUSE - NIGHT
David excitedly reads a letter from 'The Michleburg family - New Jersey'.

David
'we have been informed of your exceptional talent and can only say how privileged we feel to have you come and stay with us'.

Peter listens as he chops vegetables on a board, alongside several marrow bones.

David
'You will be pleased to know that we are having the Bosendorfer tuned especially for you.'

Peter scoops the vegetables into a steaming pot.

David
'We eagerly await your innement -'

Margaret
Imminent, fool.

SUZIE
I wonder if they've got a cadillac?

David
'Imminent arrival And look forward to hearing you play for us. Kindest wishes, Simon and Basha Mickleburg.'

Peter chops more vegetables - the simple words are like daggers. RACHEL is mindful of his brooding silence.

SUZIE
Read it again.

Margaret
Not again!

She turns the radio up.
David
You're just jealous.

Peter simmers.

SUZIE
Just the bit about the parakeet and the dog and the two cats.

Margaret puts her hands over her ears.

David
'\* you'll enjoy the company of our parakeet and our poodle called Margaret'.

Margaret
Pig! It is not!

She grabs the letter and David tries to get it; all yelling, playing 'keepings off' around the room.

David
Jealous, jealous, give it!

Margaret
Pig! Pig!

Peter
ENOUGH!

He sweeps a bottle of milk off the bench; it explodes at SUZIE's feet.

Peter
Enough of this nonsense!

David pales as Peter tears the letter up. SUZIE cries.

David
Daddy?

Peter
Forget it! You are not going. David is not going anywhere. (Silence.)
What are you looking at, you fools? He is not going to America! I won't let anyone destroy this family!

David
Daddy, but Daddy please -

Peter
I know what is best, David. I know because I am your father and this is your family.

Stunned silence. David runs out of the house.

Peter
David! David come back -

The door slams.

RACHEL
(in Yiddish)
Why now!? Why!?

Peter slaps her.

EXT. BEN Rosen'S HOUSE - NIGHT
The house is in darkness. David knocks. He's been running, in a sweat.

David
Mr. Rosen?

No answer.

David
Mr. Rosen. It's David.
(He bangs at the door.)
Please Mr. Rosen. Please.

There's nobody home. David slides down the door, clutching his knees, bewildered.

Cut to water rippling in the moonlight. David's reflection appears in the pond. He watches the distortion of his face in the water, then slaps the surface and after a moment the image settles again. He puts his head under, right up to his shoulders.

Cut to underwater, David's face, as bubbles escape from his mouth. In fact we are:

INT. HELFOTT BATHROOM - NIGHT
We realize David's face is underwater in the bath. He surfaces, for air and just stares, breathing awkwardly. Peter enters in a dressing gown.
Peter
Come on David, you have been long enough. Are you feeling better now? Silly boy, all this nonsense. This is your home, this is where you belong.

David's POV: Peter peeling off his dressing gown singlet, talking but there is no sound - it's like a dream. Peter goes to get in but stops as he sees something in the bath that horrifies him.

Peter
David!
(He slaps David's head.)
You animal. You disgusting animal.

He slashes at David with a white singlet, splashing water everywhere.

Peter
To shit in the bath. To do this to me. You callous boy. To shit like an animal.

David barely reacts as the attack with the wet singlet continues, across his bare back, his head - water arcs across the small bathroom with each blow.

Just as suddenly as it started, it's over. Peter is gone. Water runs down the walls like blood. A drop forms on the flickering light globe, then falls. David just stares in shock. Silence.

INT. SYNAGOGUE - DAY
RACHEL is huddled with SUZIE, Margaret and LOUISE in the upper balcony. The Jewish community watches as David sings from the Torah, taking his bar mitzvah, head bowed, almost cowering.

Rosen senses something is wrong. He looks across at Peter whose stern unwavering expression gives nothing away.

Close-up: Peter, a man of steel.

EXT. HELFGOTT HOUSE - NIGHT
Wide shot. The house is in near darkness. Rosen walks up purposefully and scrapes the front gate open. He knocks at the door. No answer.

INT. HELFGOTT HOUSE - NIGHT
In the hallway - Rosen's silhouette through the opaque glass. He knocks again.

Reveal Peter, in the shadowy darkness, the outside world completely shut out.

INT. THE LOUNGEROOM - NIGHT
The air is thick with tension. RACHEL amuses little LOUISE.

SUZIE flips through the scrapbook. Margaret fingers the same note on the piano. All stop as the knocking echoes again through the solemn quiet, like a knell. Silence.

Margaret
This house is like a concentration camp.

She lets the piano lid drop shut. In the hallway Rosen's shadow waits at the door.

Rosen - (V.O.)
Peter? I know you can hear me. Don't do this to David. You mustn't.

Peter's eyes glow with anger in the darkness.

Silence.

EXT. HELFGOTT HOUSE - NIGHT
Rosen
Peter!

Rosen give up, turns to go, but then as an afterthought:

Rosen
Whatever you do, don't inflict bloody Rachmaninov on him. He's not ready!

INT. HELFGOTT HOUSE - NIGHT
In the hallway - Rosen's shadow disappears. The gate is heard scraping open as he leaves.

Peter just stands there. The sound of Rosen's car is heard driving away, the headlights flicker across Peter's face.

INT. HELFGOTT HOUSE - NIGHT
Peter stands over the bed where David lies, facing away.

Peter
David.
(No reply.)
David. My boy? Still you don't speak to me?

Pause.

Peter
It's a terrible thing to hate, to hate your fatehr.

Silence. He sits on the bed.

Peter
Life is cruel, but music, it will always be your friend. Everything else will let you down in the end. Everything. Believe me.
(Pause.)
Please don't hate me David.

He begins to cry. He sobs.

David looks at his father crying, full of confusion. Their eyes meet and Peter pulls David up and hugs him. David throws his arms around his neck.

Peter
(in Yiddish)
Don't hate me.

Peter kisses David repeatedly on the side of the face, all the while stuttering:

Peter
It's tough, life can be tough but you have to survive, say it. You have to.

David
Survive, Daddy.

Peter
That's right, David. No one will love you like me. You can't trust anyone but I will always be there - always be with you, forever. Do you understand?

David
Yes, Daddy, forever.

They hug as we begin to pull back looking down on them.

Peter
Forever and ever.
Peter AND David
Forever and ever.

INT. David'S ROOM. EDEN LODGE - NIGHT
ADULT David sits on the floor in the middle of the room, scrounging for a match amidst the mess of paper and music spread around him. He picks up something.

It's a crumpled old letter with distinctive letterhead: Royal College of Music. David peers myopically at it - we only glimpse a few words: 'Dear Mr. Helfgott, we are pleased to inform you.'

Fade up - music, from the past - 'Sospiro' by Liszt. It continues over:

INT. TRAIN TUNNEL. DAY. THE PAST.
The train exits a tunnel into bright strobing light.
EXT. OVERGROWN DRIVEWAY OF KATHERINE'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON
Bright light pours through a jungle of trees and exotic plants. David makes his way down the long overgrown drive. Finally, a small weatherboard cottage comes into view, its verandah wreathed in wisteria, jasmine and honeysuckle.

EXT. KATHERINE'S HOUSE. VERANDAH - NIGHT
A photograph of David is removed from a paper bag. It's David at his best, supremely confident.

KATHERINE
Perfect; I'll treasure it until the day I die.

David has finished eating dinner.

KATHERINE
Are you full?

David
Full as a goog, Katherine; full as a goog.

INT. KATHERINE'S HOUSE - NIGHT
David plays the final bars of the Appassionata. When he finishes, he looks to KATHERINE in front of several photos on the mantel, lost in the past, moved by his playing.

KATHERINE
Each time you play 'Sospiro' it expresses so completely the inexpressible.
David
Is that good?

KATHERINE
(sits next to him)
It's divine.

David
Inexpressibly divine.

Katherine
Quite!

He starts playing again.

David
Tell me a story, Katherine. What story is it today?

David watches her - eyes closed, head swaying.

KATHERINE
A new story - drops of water.

David
Raindrops?

KATHERINE
Yes, raindrops.

David's head sways as he plays the passage.

KATHERINE
Listen. It's the wind.

Cut to the verandah. Moonlight filters through.

David - (V.O.)
The wind!

Leaves flutter across the ground Branches sway

David - (V.O.)
The stream.

Katherine - (V.O.)
The river.

David - (V.O.)
The ocean, Katherine!
INT. KATHERINE'S HOUSE - DAY
The photograph of David, now framed, is on the mantel.

KATHERINE's VOICE
You are Krishna, Christ and Dionysus. In your beauty, tenderness and strength

The camera moves towards the piano, where David is stooped over. We just see the top of his head until he looks up and, we realize, years have passed. David is now a young adult. He scribbles the words of the poem onto a score, awed by their beauty as she continues to read.

KATHERINE
To you, all these wild weeds and wind flowers of my life. I bring my lord and lay them at your feet.'

EXT. KATHERINE'S HOUSE - NIGHT
Wide shot. Lights burn warmly in the windows of the old home.

CUT TO:
the front door opens and KATHERINE sees David out.

David
Good night, Katherine.

She kisses him warmly. He ambles off, awkward as a puppy, into the night.

Katherine
Good luck, David.

INT. CONCERT HALL - NIGHT
Stagehands carefully position the grand piano onstage. Lights and curtains are being set for a performance. Cut to backstage, hands soak in a steaming bowl of water, next to it is a score of Rachmaninov's Third. David warms his hands in the water, the poise and confidence of his younger years gone, replaced by a shambling insecurity. He throws a nervous look around at the other contestants:

A CELLIST warms up, a VIOLINIST paces, a CONTESTANT goes over her score while another pianist, ROGER, 25, warms up on an old upright piano in the corner.

Cut to the foyer. The audience assembles, waiting to go in.
A poster tells us the occasion is the 'ABC - NATIONAL CONCERTO COMPETITION'.

Arriving amidst the furs and jewellery, Peter is just another face in the crowd. Something draws his attention: BEN Rosen on the stair. He catches Peter looking. Neither hides their contempt. Rosen comments to his companion:

Rosen
Poor man's Leopold Mozart.

CUT TO:
Onstage. A piano cover is removed revealing gold letters: 'BOSENDORFER'. David is drawn towards the grand piano, mesmerized by its magnificence. He circles it, oblivious to everything else. The sound of applause fades up:

ANNOUNCER -(V.O.)
That was our final contestant -

INT. KATHERINE'S HOUSE - NIGHT
ANNOUNCER -(radio v.o., continued)
David Helfgott, who gave a stirring performance of Rachmaninov's Third Concerto for Piano in D Minor:

KATHERINE looks at the framed photo of adolescent David

KATHERINE
Bravo, David.

ANNOUNCER-(radio v.o.)
The judges will now confer.

INT. CONCERT HALL - NIGHT
In the audience, Peter is anxious as the jury confers. Rosen observes him. Backstage, THE CONTESTANTS assemble in readiness, wishing each other luck.

An envelope is handed to the ANNOUNCER who adjusts his bow-tie then steps onto the stage. David shuffles nervously on the spot, standing next to ROGER, whose focus is on the stage.

David
It's a tough game isn't it, Roger?

Roger
A bloodsport.
Announcer
Ladies and gentlemen.

Peter leans forward in anticipation.

Announcer
I am pleased to announce the winner of this year's ABC National Concerto Competition is - Roger Woodward.

Applause. Peter's face turns to stone.

David
Well done, well done, Roger.

The other contestants congratulate ROGER then he walks out onto the stage to a loud ovation.

David watches from the wings as ROGER takes his bows in the bright spotlight.

INT. KATHERINE'S HOUSE - DAY
A framed photo of KATHERINE's father is on the mantel, amidst others including the one of David as a bright adolescent.

David
What was he like, Katherine?

She looks up from her book.

David
Your father.

She puts the book aside.

KATHERINE
He was forever busy in his study. 'Go away, Kattie, I'm writing,' he'd always say. One day, I was very young, I got so annoyed I emptied the inkpots all over his desk and I scrawled on his work, pages of it. When he saw it he stood there seething with anger; I could feel it.

David fills with dread.

Katherine
'What are you doing?' he shouted.

It startles David, feeding his own fears.
KATHERINE
There was this terrible silence. I just stared at him and said, 'Go away, daddy, I'm writing.'

David is suspended.

KATHERINE
He ran at me and picked me up, and cuddled me breathless. My first literary effort he always called it.

Silence. KATHERINE sees there's something troubling David.

KATHERINE
What is it?
(No reply.)
David?

He extracts a letter from his pocket. She takes it and reads it.

KATHERINE
The Royal College of Music. A scholarship. David that's marvelous!

David
Won't cuddle me Katherine, oh no.

He wrings his hands full of anxiety.

KATHERINE
He can't stop you, David.

David
Such an angry lion.

Katherine
Nonsense, he's a pussycat.

She holds him comfortingly and looks into his uncertain eyes to give him strength.

KATHERINE
I'll miss you.

INT. KATHERINE'S HOUSE - DAY
Close-up - a small box which KATHERINE takes from the sideboard.
These were for my son but he left home before I could give them to him.

David opens it and takes out an exquisite pair of red fur-lined kid gloves.

You'll need them. It gets very, very cold in London.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DUSK
A fiery red sky. David walks along, churning with anxiety. He stops and takes the gloves out of the gladstone bag he's carrying. He draws them on, then walks off leaving the bag behind.

INT. HELFGOTT HOUSE - NIGHT
David enters quietly, makes his way through the darkness.

Where have you been?

A table lam is switched on to reveal Peter sitting there.

I missed the train.

Peter's eyes glow with hostility.

That Prichard woman!

David goes to move away.

What is this?

The gloves David's wearing. He takes a backward step.

What?

(Stands.)

Look at me. Look at me!

David has no choice. Peter's eyes burn through him.

David?
David slowly extracts the letter, backs away as Peter reads.

Peter
You think you can just do as you please? Huh?

David
I... I want to go; I'm going. You can't stop me.

A terrible silence. Then Peter comes at David like a lumbering bear.

Peter
I am your father. Your father! Who has done everything for you; you cruel, callous boy!

David tries uselessly to fend him off.

David
Daddy -

Peter
I am your father!

He slaps David around the head, kocking his glasses off.

David
Please Daddy -

Peter
Stupid boy!

SUZIE runs in and tries to pull Peter away.

SUZIE
No -

Peter gives SUZIE a backhand.

David
It's not Suzie's fault.

David charges forward, crashing Peter into the wall.

RACHEL
(racing in)
Stop it! Stop it!

Peter throws David across the room. Margaret intervenes.
Peter
Get out of the way!

He picks up a chair and throws it against the wall.

EXT. HELFGOTT HOUSE - NIGHT
RACHEL - (V.O.)
(screams)
No!

Dogs bark. Neighbours' lights go on.

INT. HELFGOTT HOUSE - NIGHT
You want to go? Go! Go on!

He has David in a headlock, choking him. They bang into the walls, locked together in a fierce struggle. The photo of the rabbi crashes to the ground. Furniture is skittled - chess pieces scattered.

Rachel
(screams, in Yiddish)
No! Stop! Stop!

She bashes his arms with her fists trying to get him to let go of David who can't breathe. Margaret tries to pull Peter away.

Margaret
I'll get the police!

Finally, Peter lets go of David who slumps to the floor.

Peter
He's alright, leave him.

Catching his breath, he sees his terrified family, only now registering the horror of what has happened. Silence. David fumbles for his glasses. He picks up the crumpled letter.

Peter
David, are you alright? Are you?

Peter approaches, with remorse.

Peter
Come on, David.
David
I'm old enough to make up my own mind.

He backs away, into the corridor.

Peter
(laughs)
He thinks he's going to London.

David
I've been accepted by the Royal College of Music.

David is full of confusion.

Peter
What do you think is going to happen to you in London?

David wipes his bloody nose, edges down the corridor.

Peter
David, listen to me. If you go, you will never be anybody's son, the girls will lose a brother. Is that what you want? You want to destroy this family.

David
I'm sorry, sorry -

He opens the door. RACHEL holds the girls, all crying.

Peter
If you love me you will stop this nonsense; you will not step outside that door. Don't make me do it!

David
Sorry.

Peter
David!

David steps over the threshold.

Peter
You will be punished for the rest of your life!!

SUZIE
David!

The door slams shut.
EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT
David runs, in a sweat, on the road to KATHERINE's. The headlights of a car bear straight down on him. It blasts its horn as it swerves around him.

Cut to a blazing fire in:

EXT. HELFGOTT BACKYARD - NIGHT
Music scores burn, school books, David's clothes. Peter throws another pile on, stokes the flames.

Burning in the fire is the scrapbook - images of YOUNG David surrender to the flames.

EXT. LONDON - DAY
'The Royal College of Music' - gold letters carved in stone above the entrance. ADULT David looks up: we are back in the present. He absorbs the imposing building as he shuffles up the steps. Behind him, the magnificent dome of the Albert Hall.

On the curb, GILLIAN is getting out of a taxi. When she looks around, there's no sign of David.

INT. RCOM CORRIDOR. DAY - The present
David shuffles along, past the practice rooms from where different instruments sound, merging into one another as David continues on his journey, his face full of childish wonder. He hears something distinct a piano. He goes to the source, a practice room at the end of the corridor. He peers through the narrow glass panel, into:

INT. PRACTICE ROOM. DAY - the present
There's a female student practicing with her teacher. She notices the face at the door a moment before it ducks out of sight.

David sneaks another impish look in the quickly retreats. Again, his face slides into frame and retreats. As if by magic, when the face appears again, it's no longer ADULT David, but the YOUNGER David, longer hair falling in ringlets around his face.

INT. PRACTICE ROOM - DAY
We are back in the past and there's an elderly teacher in the practice room who looks at his watch impatiently to make a point.

PARKES
Bravo, David. Now remind me why I'm here.

David
(enters)
Sorry, Mr. Parkes, sorry.

PROFESSOR CECIL PARKES is in his sixties. His left arm hangs limply by his side, crippled by a stroke.

PARKES
It's fortunate I'm a deeply forgiving human being.

David's VOICE
Liszt was like that, wasn't he, a great humanitarian - not that I ever met him, knew him personallor anything but he had a respect for every living breathing creature; so that was nice of him, wasn't it? Or so I read.
(Plonks a book down.)
Very improvisatorial, very sensual, Mr. Parkes. Virtuosic.

PARKES
Bacchanalian! Boldness of attack!

He bashes out chords with his one good arm.

PARKES
Diablerie! The Devil, David!

David
Whooaah, mustn't break the piano.

PARKES
Liszt broke plenty!

David
Right!

Swept up, David bashes out some chords - PARKES stops him.

PARKES
(quietly)
But you must play what's on the page; you're not Liszt, remember.

David
Not even slightly Mozart.

PARKES plays (with his good hand) to demonstrate.
PARKES
Come on, fill in for this useless arm of mine.

David plays the 'other hand'.

PARKES
The notes first, your interpretation comes on top of them.

David
On top, yes.

PARKES enjoys their playing together. He likes David.

PARKES
You agree, do you?

David
Oh yes, I always agree.

PARKES
Is that wise?

David
I don't know. Is it?

They play on. David works the pedals; he's wearing odd shoes, a black one and a brown one.

PARKES
Don't forget, it's on the page.

David
Well yes, the notes are, but not the feeling, the emotions which is what I feel.

PARKES
You mustn't sacrifice everything to emotion. It's a question of balance.

David
Is that the question, Professor?

PARKES
Precisely.

David
I thought so.

INT. RCOM FOYER - DAY
A throng of students is going up the stairs. David is coming down the other way, bumping into everyone.

David
Sorry sorry, oops, beg pardon. You look lovely today, Sarah, simply beautiful.

SARAH
Thank you, David.

David
You too, Muriel.

Male student
Ease up, Helfgott.

Laughter; David's popular with them.

REGISTRAR
Mr. Helfgott. Your allowance cheque.

Two students - ASHLEY and ROBERT - look on.

ROBERT
(to ASHLEY)
Pay day. David!

They flank David as he heads through the foyer.

ROBERT
You missed the bank. Pity! You'll have to wait until tomorrow.

David
Can't bank on the bank.

Ashley
We know someone who'll cash it, David.

David
Do we Ashley? Do we really?

Robert
What are friends for?

As they exit to:
EXT. RCOM - DAY
David
'All you need is friends', whoahhh. It's what the Beatles say.
ASHLEY
'Love' dear David.

David
Yes, Ashley darling?

Robert
Taxi!

INT. SOHO STRIP CLUB - NIGHT
David crosses to ASHLEY and ROBERT with a tray full of drinks, while a stripper bums and grinds. They drink at David's expense and puff on cigars, including David.

EXT. SOHO - NIGHT
David walks along stuffing his mouth with chocolate and Coke, taking in the sights. A transvestite with bright red-dyed hair and make-up steps out of a doorway - RAY.

RAY
Got a cigarette, love?

David
A cigarette love - love a cigarette.

He offers the packet.

RAY
I'm Ray.

David
Ray? Ray! Raylene! Whooh, pleased to meet you. I'm David, David Helfgott. Ridiculous!

RAY lights up the cigarette, then puts an arm around David.

RAY
You're very friendly, aren't you David?

David
Friendly? Do you think so? That's very important isn't it?

Ray
If you say so, sweetheart.

He steers innocent David into an alleyway.

EXT. TRAFALGAR SQUARE - SUNRISE
Close-up: the bobbing face of a pigeon. It coos. David's eyes blink open. He sees the pigeon and coos back. His face has traces of make-up on it. Under his jacket he's now wearing the lurex vest we say o on RAY.

New angle. David is curled up under a massive statue of a lion (which guards Nelson's column). Nearby a MAN hoses away bird shit.

Wide shot. David shuffles off in the early morning light, across the empty square.

INT/EXT. UPPER WINDOW. RCOM - DAY
PARKES and another teacher, GORDON VINEY, 50, sip tea as they look out the window onto the street below.

PARKES
He has the most fantastic hands.

viney
Not connected to anything above the shoulder.

Their POV.

David hurrying up some steps in the College grounds. He drops music everywhere.

PARKES
He's a little fragile.

viney
A chopinzee!

PARKES isn't amused.

PARKES
I've seen enough to suggest he can make the finals of the concerto trials.

VINEY
And what have you seen, Cecil?

A gleam in PARKES' eye.

PARKES
Moments of genius.

Viney
(laugh, bemused)
Genius. Oh really!

POV below - David scrambles chaotically after his music.

INT. RCOM - DAY
David hurries down the corridor.

VOICE
David!

He spins around to be met by GILLIAN walking towards him - we are back in the present. ADULT David looks completely baffled.

ADULT David
Gillian, what are you doing here?

INT. DIRECTOR'S OFFICE. DAY - Present
RONALD IRWIN - the Director of the College - is a distinguished-looking forty. He pours tea for GILLIAN while David looks at framed photos and various certificates on the wall, shuffling from one frame to another.

IRWIN
Is he aware of what happened? Does he remember?

Gillian
Ask him.

IRWIN
Do you remember much from your student days, David?

David
Oh yes, yes absolutely. Everything. Well kind of, kind of; or is it a bit of a blank, a bit of a scrabble, the pieces missing - is that it?

Gillian
You're the only one that knows that.

David
That's right darling, the only one -

Gillian
You were here.

David
I was, I was here, that's right I was; it seems to be true. Is it true? Or is that just the way it is?
Gillian
The way what is, David?

David
Scrabble, darling.
(To Irwin.)
It's a tough game, isn't it? A bloodsport.

gillian
Not quite.

He mumbles on as he turns back to the photos.

Gillian
Filling in the blanks is what it's all about, as you can see.

IRWIN takes in the mumbling, stooping figure of David, finding it hard to believe.

IRWIN
That performance he gave for the concerto finals, Rachmaninov's Third. I'll never forget it; I doubt anyone could.

David
Whooaahh Professor!

It's a photo of PARKES - now Sir Cecil Parkes.

INT. RCOM CORRIDOR - DAY
Doors burst open and YOUNG David tears down the corridor. We are back in the past. He slides to a stop in front of a notice: 'CONCERTO MEDAL FINALISTS (Patron: H.M. The Queen Mother)'.

'David Helfgott' is on the list of six pinned on the notice board.

ROBERT
How on earth did we manage to make the finals, dear David?

David - out of breath - can't believe it.

ASHLEY
You're a conductor's nightmare.

David pulls a 'nightmare' face as he registers his name on
the list.

David
It's true, it's true.

ROBERT
What are we going to do?

David
We're going to win, Ashley-Robert. We're going to win!

INT. PRACTICE ROOM - DAY
PARKES
Are you sure?

He takes the Rachmaninov Concerto score from David.

David
I'm never sure about anything, Mr. Parkes.

PARKES
The Bach' 3? It's monumental.

David
A mountain! The hardest piece you could everest play.

A moment. PARKES dares to even consider it.

PARKES
No one's ever been mad enough to attempt the Rach' 3.

David
Am I mad enough Professor? Am I?

INT. RCOM CORRIDOR. DAY - The present
STUDENTS mill past ADULT David, GILLIAN and the College
DIRECTOR walking in the opposite direction.

David's voice
'The point is, I didn't come to London to enjoy myself, got
to concentrate'

INT. RCOM. SAME CORRIDOR. DAY - The past
STUDENTS clear a path for YOUNG David, bumping past them, in
a flap.

David's voice
'Got to practice, Katherine; there's three important things
Mr. Parkes says: "Work, work, work"
David hurries from one door to the next, looking into the practice rooms which are all occupied by students practicing on the pianos room after room.

David's voice
'You see, I am to play in a very special competition and the winner gets to play at the Albert Hall before her Highest Royalness the Queen Mum.'

He arrives at a practice room door, the glass obscured by a jacket hanging on the inside. He opens the door and is back by the sight of TWO STUDENTS in an embrace.

David
Whooahh, a duet! Sorry.

He shuts the door, sits in the corridor and proceeds to practice in his head.

INT/EXT. PIANO STORE - DAY
David's voice
'So I bought a piano, how's that Katherine?'

David presses his face against the window, looking in at the exquisite range of grand and concert pianos.
THE END