

HARMONY

A New Musical

Music by
Barry Manilow

Book and Lyrics by
Bruce Sussman

Broadway
November 12, 2023

Directed by Warren Carlyle

For

Ari Leshnikoff, Erich Collin, Erwin Bootz,
Robert Biberti, Harry Frommerman, and
Cantor Josef Roman Cykowski,
--THE COMEDIAN HARMONISTS--
whose memory we attempt to serve,
and whose quest for harmony inspired
our quest.

"Oh star...
May your pale flame
direct the worst in us
through chaos
with the passion of
plain day."

--Derek Walcott, "The Gulf"

ACT 1

1. OPENING SEQUENCE: CARNEGIE HALL, 1933/ BERLIN, 1927-1929
 - "CONCERT AT CARNEGIE HALL".....THE GROUP
 - "HARMONY".....RABBI & THE GROUP
 - "THE AUDITIONS".....RABBI & THE GROUP

2. STREETS AND ALLEYWAYS IN BERLIN, LATE AUTUMN 1929
 - "AND WHAT DO YOU SEE?".....MARY
 - "THIS IS OUR TIME".....YOUNG RABBI, MARY, RUTH
HARRY, THE GROUP & RALLIERS

3. CLUB CINDERELLA, NOVEMBER 1929
 - "YOUR SON IS BECOMING A SINGER!".....ERICH & THE GROUP

4. KOTT'S TAILOR SHOP, DECEMBER, 1929
 - "EVERY SINGLE DAY".....YOUNG RABBI

5. THE BARBARINA CLUB, JANUARY 1930
 - "HOW CAN I SERVE YOU, MADAME?".....LESH & THE GROUP

6. THE BERLIN SYNAGOGUE, 1933
 - "THE WEDDING"..... RABBI, A CANTOR,
CHOPIN, RUTH, YOUNG RABBI, MARY & CONGREGATION

7. RALLIES IN GERMANY, 1933 / TOUR OF THE WORLD, 1933
 - "HARMONY/L' HARMONIE".....THE GROUP

8. CARNEGIE HALL, DECEMBER 1933
 - "HOME".....BOBBY & THE GROUP

 - "THRENODY" (Part I).....RABBI

ACT II

1. ZIEGFELD FOLLIES OF 1934, NEW YORK
"WE'RE GOIN' LOCO!".....,JOSEPHINE, THE GROUP & THE
ZIEGFELD FOLLIES COMPANY
2. BERLIN PHILHARMONIC HALL, JANUARY 1934
"HUNGARIAN RHAPSODY #20".....LESH & THE GROUP
3. TIVOLI PARK, COPENHAGEN, A FEW MONTHS LATER
"COME TO THE FATHERLAND!".....HARRY & THE GROUP
4. ADJACENT HOTEL ROOMS, COLOGNE, SEPTEMBER 1935
"WHERE YOU GO".....MARY & RUTH
5. A MOVIE SET IN COLOGNE, TWO DAYS LATER
"IN THIS WORLD".....CHOPIN, THE GROUP &
THE FILM CAST
"THE LIST"RABBI
6. THE NIGHT TRAIN TO MUNICH, NOVEMBER 1935
"THRENODY".....RABBI
7. THE NATIONAL THEATER, MUNICH, NOVEMBER 1935/
CALIFORNIA, 1988
"STARS IN THE NIGHT.....THE GROUP

ACT I--SCENE 1: OPENING SEQUENCE

WE see a proscenium-filling art deco poster featuring an image of six men in tails. It reads, "The Comedian Harmonists...Carnegie Hall...December 16, 1933." A 1930s-era NBC microphone stands downstage, right. OVERTURE. House lights down. WE hear the NBC signature chimes. Then a tympani roll. A RADIO ANNOUNCER takes his place at the microphone.

RADIO ANNOUNCER

Welcome to Live from Carnegie Hall! And this our final radio broadcast of the 1933 season. Tonight, Sol Hurok and the National Broadcasting Company are proud to present...the international sensations... stars of stage and screen... the top-selling recording artists in Europe...making their American debut...The Comedian Harmonists!

The poster disappears, revealing THE GROUP, dressed in tails, gathered around a grand piano. THEY sing a wordless fanfare, imitating the sounds of brass instruments.

YOUNG RABBI

Hello New York! We are The Comedian Harmonists!

HE steps back into THE GROUP who sing:

THE GROUP

(as a caliope:)
OOM-PAH-PAH, OOM-PAH-PAH,
OOM-PAH OOM-PAH OOM-PAH,
HARMONY,
WE SING IN HARMONY
LIKE THE ROBINS IN HERALD SQUARE.
HARMONY,
THE THING IS HARMONY,
ALWAYS KNOWING THERE'S SOMEONE THERE.
IN THIS JOINT
ALL ENCOUNTERS WITH COUNTERPOINT
END IN HARMONY.
AND IT'S CLEAR
NO MAN'S A SOLO HERE.
NOT EVEN ME! ME! ME! ME! ME! ME!
NO SOLO MIO!
JUST HARMONY.

There is a lighting and music shift as an OLDER MAN suddenly appears. HE is RABBI, the older incarnation of YOUNG RABBI.

RABBI turns to US as THE GROUP continues to perform at Carnegie Hall, but THEY are muted and stylized.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RABBI

The Comedian Harmonists! A cockamamie name, no? A mouthful. Co-mee-dee-ann Har-mo-nistsss? That'll bend your dentures. But the name didn't hurt us none. No, no. For a long time there, we were hot as horseradish. A sensation! Around the world! Why we...

(looking out:)

Never heard of us, huh? That's okay. There's a reason for that. But it's a story, oh what a story. And it's true!

(taking it in, spoken:)

Carnegie Hall! What a night that was! Yes, I remember...

(HIS mood darkens, but then:)

I remember eating a pastrami sandwich the size of a Steinway--right around the corner from Carnegie Hall. Oh, was that delicious. What was the name of that deli...

BOBBY

The Carnegie Deli! Geez!

RABBI

The Carnegie Deli. Geez! Funny what you forget.

HARRY

You're doin' fine. Keep going.

RABBI

These are my friends. My buddies. I don't think human beings can get any closer. You see, before all the hoopla, the movies, the concerts... before we even made our first record... back in Berlin in the early days of the Depression... No. The inflation! Right. A wheelbarrow full of money bought a slice of cheese. That's when we met for the first time. Yes, first there was...

RABBI (cont'd)

(singing:)

HARMONY...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RABBI AND THE
GROUP

UNFORGETTABLE HARMONY...
HARMONY,
DID WE HAVE HARMONY!
BUT THAT'S JUST ABOUT ALL WE HAD.
SUDDENLY,
A LITTLE HARMONY,
AND THE POVERTY'S NOT SO BAD.
THIN, WE WERE,
POOR AS SIN IN BERLIN, WE WERE!
PATCHES ON OUR PANTS.
MERCIF'LLY, WHEN YOU'RE IN HARMONY,
YOU'RE IN A TRANCE...
OTHERS WENT MARCHING,
NOT US, WE'D DANCE!

RABBI

Believe it or not, I was a rabbi before
all this started!
(doing a move:)
Can your rabbi do that?

THE GROUP

THEN DID WE
OH SO SPLENDIDLY BLEND, DID WE,
LIKE A SPELL HAD COME.
IT WAS CLEAR
THAT ALL OF US COULD HEAR
A DIFFERENT DRUM.
DRUM, DRUM. DRUM, DRUM, DRUM...
OUTSIDE, THEY HOLLERED!
BUT WE HAD...HARMONY!!

The ORCHESTRA swells. THE GROUP exits as images begin to
appear on the screens, slowly at first, then more rapidly.
Other characters appear on stage. Among them:

TITUS & ROSA

This is our time, people!

ROSA

Freedom!

It is as if the pages of the calendar are flying by in
reverse. We are traveling back to 1927. RABBI is intrigued
but then it becomes overwhelming.

RABBI

SLOW DOWN!

The images land on 'Berlin, 1927.'

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RABBI (cont'd)

Slow down.

(singing, hesitantly:)

HARMONY. FIRST THERE WAS HARMONY...

(HE's got it, happily:)

LIKE THE HARMONY HARRY WROTE

A battered piano rolls out. It is piled high with clutter. At the keyboard is HARRY, dressed humbly and a bit disheveled.

RABBI (cont'd)

(to US:)

Harry! This is a genius. He was arranging and orchestrating by the time he was seven years old!

HARRY rifles through the clutter looking for the phone.

HARRY

(into the phone:)

Tiergarten three double two.

(while HE's waiting:)

F natural...not F sharp. Yes.

(into the phone:)

Hello? Berliner Daily? Yes. I'd like to place an advertisement, please. Tuesday? What's that date?

RABBI

July 12th 1927.

HARRY

Ready for the copy? Audition announcement...

RABBI

Seeking five young men interested in performing in a new modern singing group. Must be able to sing...

RABBI AND HARRY

Harmony.

RABBI

That simple. One small ad in the Berliner Daily. You know what he got? A waiter!

LESH appears. HE wears a waiter's jacket and smokes a cigarette in a holder.

LESH

(auditioning for HARRY:)

HOW CAN I SERVE YOU...MA.....DAME!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LESH takes a drag of his cigarette.

RABBI

A chain-smoking Bulgarian tenor with a high E above C. Meshugah, no?

HARRY

Ari Leshnikoff.

LESH

They call me Lesh. Will this make me famous?

HARRY

Lesh, I want to make you the most famous Bulgarian since... I can't think of a famous Bulgarian.

As LESH, steps aside:

RABBI

HARMONY, WITH TWO THERE'S HARMONY,
WHERE THERE ONCE WAS A SINGLE NOTE.

(spoken:)

A doctor!

ERICH enters.

ERICH

Excuse me. Pardonez-moi.

HARRY

Doctor Erich Collin...

ERICH

A medical student, Maestro.

(HE bows.)

My final year. Thank God.

HARRY

I see. So, Doctor, I guess my question for you is...what is a doctor doing here?

ERICH

As Plato said, "Music is the medicine of the soul."

HARRY

And what are you doing here?

ERICH

(cornered, a beat, then:)

I can't stand the sight of blood.

ERICH steps aside and joins LESH.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RABBI
ALL ABOARD!
TWO IS COMPANY,
THREE'S A CHORD!
 (spoken:)
A pianist!

CHOPIN enters wearing a worn leather jacket. HE sits at the piano and starts to play.

HARRY
Beautiful. What is it?

CHOPIN
Just wrote it. I don't do words.

HARRY
Sounds like stars. Stars in the night.
That phrase, there...

CHOPIN
 (singing:)
STARS IN THE NIGHT...
 (spoken:)
I like it.

HARRY
 (reviewing the resume)
Erwin Bootz...

CHOPIN slams the keyboard.

CHOPIN
Terrible, huh? Erwin Bootz. I hate it.
Always have. And then I started playin'
some gigs around town, and one day this
blond says to me,
 (as the blond:)
"Hey, you play like Chopin!" And it kinda
stuck.
 (seeing HARRY is puzzled:)
Chopin. The name. I like it. And who's
gonna know I got it from playin' in a
whorehouse?

CHOPIN joins LESH and ERICH.

RABBI
FOUR CAN BE
GETTING INTERESTING
OR CAN BE
SIMPLY GETTING LOUD
 (spoken:)
A bass from the Comic Opera!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOBBY enters reading a newspaper. HE sings a wordless bass solo featuring the very bottom of his range.

BOBBY
BA-BA-BA-BA BA-BA-BA BA...etc.

HARRY
Robert Biberti. Very impressive...
Offenbach... Lehar...

BOBBY
What's the pay.

HARRY
No pay just yet.
(reaching for the stack of
music on his piano:)
But take a look at these-- I've arranged
an entire act for...

BOBBY grabs the charts out of HARRY's hands.

BOBBY
(as he peruses them:)
Any financing?

HARRY
No.

BOBBY
You did all of these?
(HARRY nods)
This bass solo here...I can do that an
octave lower.

HARRY
I bet you could. Robert, I'd love to have
you join us and...

BOBBY
(as HE joins the OTHERS:)
You can call me Bobby.

RABBI
HARMONY,
JUST THE FIVE OF...NO,
WAIT, WE WERE SIX.

RABBI appears to be stymied. YOUNG RABBI enters.

RABBI (cont'd)
("of course!")
A rabbi! Me!! Wasn't I gorgeous?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

 YOUNG RABBI
 (singing:)
SHALOM.....ALEI.....CHEM

 HARRY
Wonderful. Truly. Rabbi Josef Roman
Cyckowski. Rabbi?

 YOUNG RABBI
That's what they call me. I was training
to become a rabbi. Back in Poland. But
you can call me Joe, if...

 HARRY
No. I like Rabbi.

 YOUNG RABBI
Oh, you do. Oh.
 ("Wait...are you Jewish?")
Oh?
 ("You are!")
Oh!

 HARRY
My father is a cantor.

 YOUNG RABBI
Mine too!

 HARRY
So tell me, one cantor's son to
another...why leave the shul?

 YOUNG RABBI
 (stalling:)
It would be nice to sing in a major key
for a change?

YOUNG RABBI and HARRY join the others.

 RABBI
A Bulgarian singing waiter, a doctor, a
bass from the Comic Opera, a musical
prodigy, a whorehouse pianist...and a
Polish Rabbi...
 (cheekily:)
Walk into a bar...
 ("but seriously")
Walk into a miracle!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A train passes. The GROUP is dressed in overcoats. It's snowing above. Winter 1928. CHOPIN blows into a pitch pipe. THE GROUP sings haltingly:

 THE GROUP
HARMONY
WE SIX IN HARMONY
BAH-BAH-BAH...etc

 HARRY
 (shouted:)
You're getting it.
And softer, Bobby!

A train passes. THEY'RE in jackets again. It rains above.

 THE GROUP
THERE YOU ARE
BEING BARELY AWARE YOU ARE
SUDDENLY IN TUNE!

 HARRY
 Yes!

A train passes. Spring 1928. THEY'RE in shirt sleeves.

 THE GROUP
HARMONY! WE SING IN HARMONY!
AND THERE'S ONE OTHER THING WE DO--

THEY dance. As the dance climaxes:

 HARRY
 Here we go!

 THE GROUP
HARRY! BOBBY! ERICH! RABBI! CHOPIN! LESH!
HARRY! BOBBY! ERICH! RABBI! CHOPIN! LESH!

A train passes. In T-shirts, THEY rise to the street. Summer 1928. HARRY tosses his hat, the kitty, down center.

 RABBI & THE GROUP
WHERE YOU FIND,
YOU'RE IN HARMONY,
THERE YOU FIND
SHELTER IN A STORM.
EVERY NOTE
A BUTTON ON THE COAT
THAT KEEPS YOU WARM.

 YOUNG RABBI
STARS HAVE THE HEAVENS...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

 THE GROUP
BUT WE'VE GOT...HARMONY! HARMONY!!
TROUBLES DISAPPEAR
WHEN WHAT YOU FEEL IS WHAT YOU HEAR
NOT WHAT YOU SEE!

RABBI appears:

 RABBI
Yes! First there was..

 RABBI & THE GROUP
HAR-MO-NY!!!

MUSIC BUTTON SCENE 2

SCENE 2 A STREET IN BERLIN

A beautiful brunette, RUTH, excitedly crosses to the GROUP.

CHOPIN

Ruthie!

RUTH

You guys are getting good! Really good!
(to CHOPIN:)And you've always been good,
you talented, sexy, unkosher thing, you.
Do you know how many sins I'm committing?

CHOPIN

Well, let's see, last night there was...

RUTH

Chopin!

CHOPIN

Wait, what happened to your eye?

RUTH

Oh, it's nothing. I fell.

CHOPIN

On someone's fist?
("Come clean.")
Ruthie?

RUTH

I had a disagreement with a member of the
opposition and she took a swing at me.

CHOPIN

What did you call her?

RUTH

A fascist swine.

CHOPIN

Ruthie!

RUTH

C'mon, we'll be late for the rally.
(Beat.) You're not wearing red. It's a
Bolshevik rally and I am the speaker. If
you're coming with me, you have to wear
red.

CHOPIN

I can't go, Ruthie. We finally got an
audition, how 'bout that!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RUTH
(after a beat of
disappointment:)
Go to your audition. That's important.
But what I do is important to me, too.
So... next time, ok? Ok.

HE kisses her. RUTH exits. CHOPIN rejoins the GROUP.

HARRY
(to YOUNG RABBI:)
I heard her speak at a rally. She's
wonderful.

As the others exit, LESH and ERICH lag behind. ERICH spots a
beautiful REDHEAD approaching:

ERICH
Lesh, brace yourself. Look.

LESH
WOW!! Erich, what is it about redheads?

As ERICH and LESH exit, following HER:

ERICH
I'm pretty sure it's their hair.

MARY appears, carrying a coat. SHE crosses to YOUNG RABBI.

RABBI
Mary! The world was crumbling around us
and Mary appeared, like a rose in
December.

MARY helps YOUNG RABBI put on the coat.

MARY
Here. A customer brought it into the shop
a year ago to have the lining mended, and
never picked it up
(a cappella:)
EVERY NOTE,
A BUTTON ON THE COAT
THAT KEEPS YOU WARM...(spoken:) There.

YOUNG RABBI
You're beautiful, you're brilliant, and
you listen to the lyrics! Do you have any
idea how happy you make me?

MARY
Yes. Odd, isn't it? How do two people
find happiness in times like these?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

YOUNG RABBI

I think it just...happens.

MARY

We didn't just happen, Rabbi. I decided we should meet and made sure we did.

YOUNG RABBI

What?!

MARY

That's right. The group performed every Tuesday in front of my shop window. Right? And every Tuesday I'd come out and drop a little something in your kitty.

RABBI

Buttons.

YOUNG RABBI

Buttons! You always left buttons! And I asked you why.

MARY

Did you notice me?

YOUNG RABBI

Yes.

MARY

Then it worked.

RABBI

She's right. She was always right.

YOUNG RABBI

Look. (Pulling a button from his pocket:) I even saved the first one.

MARY

See? We didn't exactly 'just happen.' I think you have to fight for happiness. Are you a fighter, Rabbi?

YOUNG RABBI

I think I see our train coming.

RABBI exits.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARY

Ah. And what else do you see?

(SHE sings:)

EVERY DAY, AS I SIT AND SEW AT MY WINDOW
I LOOK OUT ON A WORLD THAT'S TEARING
APART.

THIS IS WHAT I SEE.

AND WHAT DO YOU SEE?

TIME GOES BY AND THE TIMES GROW WORSE
THROUGH MY WINDOW.

STILL I WATCH AS THE MADNESS DARKENS THE
HEART.

THIS IS WHAT I SEE.

AND WHAT DO YOU SEE?

TELL ME HOW DO WE LIVE
IN A WORLD THAT IS CRUMBLING AWAY--
AND BE HAPPY, AS WE ARE TODAY?

PEOPLE SAY, 'MARY TURN AWAY
FROM THE WINDOW.

ALL THE WORRY IN ALL THE WORLD
DOESN'T PAY.'

AND STILL I WONDER

WHAT KIND OF FUTURE STARTS THIS WAY?

FOR YOU...AND ME...

AND WHAT DO YOU SEE?

AND WHAT DO YOU...SEE

YOUNG RABBI

I KNOW, MARY, I SEE.

THIS IS OUR TIME, MARY.

THIS IS OUR TIME.

BAD TIMES, SO WHAT ELSE IS NEW?
WHERE I GREW UP THE PEOPLE THREW
A POGROM EVERY MONTH OR TWO.

YA WANNA KNOW WHAT HAPPINESS IS?
TRUST ME, THAT AIN'T IT, BUT THIS IS
OUR TIME, COULD IT BE A GOOD TIME?

I KNOW, WOULDN'T THAT BE STRANGE?
SOMEHOW, WHEN I'M NOT REELING

I FIND MYSELF FEELING
THAT EVERYTHING'S READY TO CHANGE!

MARY

YOU THINK A BETTER BRIGHTER DAY IS
WAITING RIGHT THERE.

YOUNG RABBI

Yes.

MARY

JUST NEVER MIND THE WORLD IS TOTALLY
INSANE.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

YOUNG RABBI
("scary...")
Ooooh....

MARY
YOU THINK THE END OF EVERY TUNNEL HAS A
LIGHT THERE.
YOU'D NEVER THINK, "ONCOMING TRAIN!"

YOUNG RABBI
HERE'S TO OUR TIME,
CHANGING TO THE BEST TIME!

MARY
WHO KNOWS, IF IT ONLY COULD--

YOUNG RABBI
WITH A HAPPY SURPRISE IN
A CLEARING HORIZON
AND EVERYTHING CHANGED FOR THE GOOD!
THIS IS OUR TIME--'CAUSE I LOVE YOU!
HERE'S TO OUR TIME...

MARY
I DO LOVE YOU!

BOTH
THIS IS OUR TIME!

RUTH rushes on. A YOUNG WOMAN and MAN, both dressed in red,
hand out flyers to a crowd. THEY are CLARA and TITUS.

RUTH
Clara! Titus! There you are! I thought
the rally was on Friedrichstrasse. What
happened?

TITUS
Some other bunch beat us to it.

RUTH
Who?

CLARA
I dunno. Anarchists, Nazis, monarchists,
who knows.

TITUS
They had guns. And they didn't know what
to make of the likes of me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RUTH

(Handing CLARA flyers:)

Here. I'll take the other side of the street.

BOBBY leads THE GROUP on joining RABBI and MARY.

BOBBY

I never heard of this place. The Cinderella Club? And who's this girl singer?

HARRY

He didn't say.

BOBBY

He didn't say. Did you ask?

HARRY

Bobby, I finally got us an audition. What's the bad news here?

BOBBY

The bad news, Harry, is you've got great ideas, but you don't know how to deliver. You always manage to piss it all away.

HARRY

You're right. That's why I need you, Bobby.

(singing:)

HELP IT HAPPEN. DRAW THE PLAN.
YOU CAN'T DO IT--NOR CAN I--
BUT BOBBY, WE CAN!

YOUNG RABBI

THIS IS OUR TIME!

HARRY

BOBBY, THIS IS OUR TIME!

YOUNG RABBI

OUR WORLD...

BOBBY

IF THE WORLD SURVIVES!

YOUNG RABBI

THEN WE'VE GOT TIME!

LESH

AND MAYBE...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERICH
IT COULD BE...

CHOPIN
OH, BABY!

ALL
THIS IS OUR....

RUTH appears.

RUTH
TIME IS ON OUR SIDE!
RISE UP, PEOPLE, RISE UP!
THE OLD REGIME HAS FAILED!
THE PUPPETS OF THE BOURGEOISIE
HAVE ONCE AGAIN DERAILED.
THE COFFIN CAN BE NAILED.
IT'S TIME TO WAKE
THE PROLETARIAT!
LET US MAKE
THESE TIMES OUR CHARIOT!
RISE UP, COMRADES, RISE UP!

BOLSHEVIKS
THIS IS OUR TIME,

RUTH
PEOPLE, THIS IS OUR TIME!

BOLSHEVIKS
FREEDOM!

RUTH
REVOLUTION COMES!
THE UPPER CRUST WHO FED US CRUMBS,
IGNORED THE CRIES AND BUILT THE SLUMS,
WHO WOULDN'T LET US NEAR THE TABLE...
NOW WE GET TO CLEAR THE TABLE!

BOLSHEVIKS
OUR TIME!

RUTH
PEOPLE, THIS IS OUR TIME!
WHERE THERE'S DIGNITY DEPRIVED-
FOR THE WORKERS, THE NEEDY,
THE SLAVES OF THE GREEDY,
MY BROTHERS, OUR TIME HAS ARRIVED!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALL
THIS IS OUR TIME,
MAYBE IT'S THE LAST TIME.
WHO KNOWS, BUT AT LEAST IT'S OURS!
AND IT WON'T BE THE FIRST TIME
THAT MAN PICKED THE WORST TIME
TO LIFT UP HIS EYES TO THE STARS!

YOUNG RABBI
THIS IS OUR TIME, MARY,
THIS IS OUR TIME!

RUTH
THIS IS OUR TIME, PEOPLE.

RUTH AND
BOLSHEVIKS
THIS IS OUR TIME!

THE GROUP
THIS IS OUR TIME, FELLAS,
THIS IS OUR TIME!

ALL BUT RUTH
THIS IS OUR.....

RUTH
NOW THE JOURNEY BEGINS!
LET US MAKE HISTORY!
THIS OUR DESTINY!
NOW'S THE HOUR!
THIS IS OUR.....
TIME!

ALL
OUR TIME!

SEGUE: SCENE 3

SCENE 3: CLUB CINDERELLA, NOVEMBER 1929

Club Cinderella takes shape. RABBI leans against the proscenium, taking it all in. We see and hear THE GROUP singing an accompaniment as if they were instruments.

RABBI

Ah, yes. Club Cinderella. Sounds like a magical place, doesn't it? It was a dive. When people applauded, plaster fell from the ceiling into their drinks. And the owner. A real character. What was his name...

(produces a toupee from his pocket and places it on his head:)

Fritz Kruger, at your service.

FRITZ takes his place behind the scrim. We see HIM in silhouette and hear:

FRITZ (V.O.)

Wasn't she wonderful, ladies and gentlemen! Miss Marlene Dietrich! Remember that name. And remember you saw her here first at Fritz Kruger's Club Cinderella! Fritz Kruger, at your service.

There's a smattering of applause when they finish. Backstage.

LESH

(to DIETRICH:)

Nice working with you.

SHE resumes HER slow cross and exits.

YOUNG RABBI

You mean nice working behind you?! She wouldn't let anyone see us!

BOBBY

(heated, to HARRY:)

Did you know she was gonna stick us behind the scenery?

HARRY

Of course not.

BOBBY

Did Fritz know when he hired us?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HARRY

I dunno.
("here he comes")
Ask him.

FRITZ enters. (**He is RABBI.**)

FRITZ

I don't think I even paid the electric bill tonight.

CHOPIN

Oh, what did you expect? Miss Marlene Dietrich is terrible!

HARRY

She's gonna be huge. Watch.

YOUNG RABBI

You're joking! The house was half empty!

FRITZ

Not because of her. Welcome to the Depression, boys. And now the cockamamie riots, it's bad for business.

HARRY

Fritz, this wasn't what we agreed on. Hiding us like that.

FRITZ

Listen, hot shot. You scared her at rehearsal. She thought you were too good. So she told me to put you behind the scenery. Take it as a compliment.

LESH

Scared her?

YOUNG RABBI

I'll tell you what scared me -- those Nazi thugs right up front. Fritz, why did you give them ringside seats?

FRITZ

I didn't give them anything. They took those seats the same way they took twelve seats in the Reichstag. They're bullies.

HARRY

Well thank God it's only twelve seats. They need hundreds more to do any damage.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRITZ

Fellas listen, there's someone here who wants to meet you. He gave me his card. It's engraved.

HE hands a calling card to YOUNG RABBI.

YOUNG RABBI

Richard Strauss.

This causes a stir. ERICH slips off stage, unnoticed.

BOBBY

Well, bring him up to the dressing room Fritz.

FRITZ exits.

LESH

I can't believe this. What do I say?

BOBBY

Nothing. Let me do the talking.

HARRY

Now wait a minute, Bobby...

BOBBY

Richard Strauss is my world. We're not in the subways anymore. (To LESH:) Say nothing.

LESH positively vibrates with anticipation. We hear FRITZ's voice offstage:

FRITZ (V.O.)

Maestro Richard Strauss, The Melody Makers.

STRAUSS enters, wearing an overcoat and holding a top hat. (HE too is RABBI.) LESH cannot stand it anymore and erupts:

LESH

Oh my God!!

STRAUSS

'Maestro' will be sufficient. Congratulations! Those were some intriguing harmonies coming from behind the scenery. It all took me quite by surprise. Especially given the tragic scene in front of the scenery. Where do you perform next?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HARRY
(jumping in:)
We have several offers on the table.

STRAUSS
Ah. I have just received a frantic call from, Ezra Kaplan. Owns The Barbarina Club. Terribly posh. He's lost his featured act. He asked me if I could give my opinion of Miss Dietrich as a possible replacement. But after tonight's surprise, well, I suspect he would love to... 'discover' you. I'd be happy to call him. Shall I?

THEY all just stand there, dumbstruck, except LESH who is bursting out of his skin waiting for someone to respond.

LESH
YES!!

LESH embraces STRAUSS.

STRAUSS
Done. Once again, a delightful surprise. Gentlemen. (To LESH:) Unhand me!

STRAUSS exits. ERICH re-emerges. After a beat, a group "whoop!" erupts.

LESH
Oh my God! Erich, the Barbarina Club! Wow!

ERICH
Well, let's not get our hopes up. It's just an audition.

HARRY
But what if we get it. That's bad for you, isn't it.

YOUNG RABBI
What is this?

HARRY
Erich, there's nothing we can't work out if we do it together.

ERICH
I had a feeling you knew.

CHOPIN
Could we drop the Svengali act and let the rest of us in on this?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERICH
Sorry, it's deeply personal.

BOBBY
What the hell is this? Just spit it out.

ERICH
I'm going to have to leave the group if you get this job. Let's leave it at that.

LESH
Erich, no! Harry?!

ERICH
Sorry, Lesh. There's nothing Harry can do about this. It's my problem.

BOBBY
What's your problem!!

ERICH
I'm rich!! (pause) No! My parents are rich! Unfathomably. They know everybody! Strauss gave me my first piano lesson.

YOUNG RABBI
I don't understand. You're mixing kasha with borscht.

ERICH
I haven't told you about them the same way I haven't told them about you.

YOUNG RABBI
Why such secrets?

ERICH
Because their son, me, is supposed to be a surgeon. Period. If they knew what I was up to, they'd be devastated. Sir Walter Scott put it best: 'Oh what a tangled web we weave when first we practice to deceive.'

YOUNG RABBI
My mother put it best: 'You can't dance at two weddings with one tokhes!'

ERICH
I never thought it would come to this. As long as we were singing in subways and alleys--or behind the scenes--but the Barbarina Club? Wow. Good for you. But not good for me. They'd find out.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOBBY

And what the hell are we supposed to do?!

YOUNG RABBI

Let's rehearse.

HARRY

Wait a minute, we're not finished here.

YOUNG RABBI

I didn't say what we were going to rehearse, did I? (To ERICH:) Doctor Collin, sit here please. Lesh, you be Mama Collin and...

ERICH

Oh, no!

YOUNG RABBI

Sit. Just a rehearsal. Bobby, you be...What do you call him? Papa? Father? Your Highness? What?

ERICH

Daddy.

YOUNG RABBI

Oy vey. Tell 'em. Okay. Hit it.

ERICH

Mama? Daddy? We need to have a talk.
MAMA, DADDY, THERE'S SOMETHING
YOUR SON NEEDS TO TELL YOU...
ME, YOUR ONLY SON...

LESH AND BOBBY

OH THE ONE WHO'S A DOCTOR!

ERICH

Yeah.
HAS A LITTLE PROBLEM TO EXPLAIN.
MY LIFE'S A DULL ENDEAVOR NOW,
AND EVEN LIMBS I SEVER NOW...
THE JOY IS GONE FOREVER NOW
FROM SUFFERING AND PAIN!
I KNOW YOU WILL FIND IT IRONICAL,
A SMEAR ON THE FAMILY CHRONICLE,
OH DADDY, HOLD ONTO YOUR MONOCLE!!
YOUR SON IS BECOMING A SINGER!

HARRY, YOUNG
RABBI & CHOPIN

YOUR SON IS BECOMING A SINGER!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOBBY
WIFE, GET A KNIFE.
HELP ME OPEN UP A VEIN.

LESH
GET A NURSE,

HARRY, YOUNG RABBI & CHOPIN
YOUR SON IS BECOMING A SINGER!

LESH
SHAME TO OUR NAME
FAR TO HORRID TO EXPLAIN!

BOBBY
WE'LL SAY HE CONTRACTED MALARIA!

LESH
THEN QUIETLY SLIP FROM THE AREA!

LESH/BOBBY/YOUNG
RABBI
AND HIDE IN A HUT IN BULGARIA!

REDHEAD/LESH/CHOP
IN/ HARRY/YOUNG
RABBI
CAUSE ERICH'S BECOMING A SINGER!

ERICH
(sheepishly:)
I'LL BE HAPPY.

YOUNG RABBI
HAPPY!

HARRY
HAPPY!

CHOPIN
HAPPY!

LESH AND REDHEAD
HAPPY!

ERICH
(boldly:)
I'LL BE HAPPY! WHAT A CONCEPT!
ERICH COLLIN BEING HAPPY...
WAS I EVER REALLY HAPPY?
IT DOESN'T EVEN RING A BELL,
SO WHAT THE HELL!
YOUR SON IS BECOMING A SINGER!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THE GROUP
HALLELUJAH AND AMEN! THANK THE LORD,
OUR ERICH'S BECOMING A SINGER!
YOU'VE PULLED YOUR LAST APPENDIX, DOC
AND SEEN YOUR FINAL CHICKEN POCK!
YOUR SON IS BECOMING A SINGER!

ERICH
SOUND THE HORNS AND RING THE BELLS!

THE GROUP
GOOD IDEA

ERICH
Perfect!

THE GROUP
YOUR SON IS BECOMING A SINGER!
FOR HAPPINESS TO RING A BELL,
YOU'RE GONNA HAVE TO RING IT FEL-
LA! MAKE THAT CLANGER SWAY!
YOUR SON IS BECOMING A SINGER...

ERICH sings a solo cadenza on the word, "singer..."

ERICH	THE FIVE
TODAY! TODAY!	TODAY-
HOORAY! HOORAY!	
TODAY! TODAY!	YAY-
HOORAY! HOORAY!	
TODAY!	TODAY!

MUSIC BUTTON. SCENE 4

SCENE 4: KOTT'S TAILOR SHOP

"Kott's Fine Tailoring" appears in reverse in a 'window.'
RUTH enters the shop. A bell rings.

MARY

I've got it, Mrs. Kott. If she comes back out, remember, it's your coat and you had the hem taken up.

MARY produces a red coat from the bag. RUTH gasps.

RUTH

It's beautiful! Where did you find it?

MARY

I made it. Found the material on the back of an old sofa. My contribution to the revolution.

RUTH

Absolutely stunning! You are amazing. Rabbi is a lucky man. (Seeing MARY turn away:) What is it? What's wrong?

MARY

He's picking me up after work and...
I think he's going to propose.

RUTH

Oh my God! Mazel tov!

MARY

That's a little premature.

RUTH

Premature? You've been going together for, what, two years?

MARY

Two and a half.

RUTH

And on the Jewish calendar, it's longer!
(THEY laugh. SHE leads MARY to the sewing table:)
Come on. What is it, Mary. What's wrong. Is it because...

MARY

Oh. No. I decided that if we got married, I'd convert. I figure, your God is where you find Him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RUTH

Mary! How wonderful! So...what's the problem?

MARY

He was a Rabbi. Now he's not. Things got bad in Poland. And he ran. There's a pattern. It worries me. Why should I think it will change now?

RUTH

Any Jew who flees Poland is performing an act of self-preservation.

MARY

And what if things get that bad here?

RUTH

They won't. This is Germany, not Poland. And we're fighting it. (SHE hands some leaflets to MARY:) Here, take a few. Mary, if Rabbi is the right man, you already know it. And you'll make the right decision.

MARY

Thanks, Ruthie. Go. Go change the world!

YOUNG RABBI enters. A bell rings. RUTH twirls around for HIM. As RUTH exits:

YOUNG RABBI

Wow! Look at you!

MARY

Hi. She's amazing, that one.

YOUNG RABBI

(handing HER the bouquet:)
You're amazing.

MARY

Oh, Rabbi...

YOUNG RABBI

You know I love you, don't you?

MARY

Rabbi! Mrs. Kott is...

YOUNG RABBI

You do know.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARY

Yes, I know. And I love you.

YOUNG RABBI

I want to spend the rest of my life with you.

MARY

I know.

YOUNG RABBI

We'll be happy.

MARY

Mmmm.

YOUNG RABBI

Marry me, Mary.

MARY

No.

YOUNG RABBI

What?

MARY

We need to talk about that.

YOUNG RABBI

Talk? What's wrong?

MARY

Rabbi, I love you. And besides the fact that I find you the sexiest creature on earth, you are the sweetest, most decent man I've ever known.

YOUNG RABBI

I sound perfect! I'll marry me!

MARY

I would too. In any other time or place. But I don't think the two of us can make it in this world. That's what's wrong.

YOUNG RABBI

I feel like I've done something wrong. What did I do?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARY

Nothing. (Beat.) Do you know what we're in for if you marry me? I don't think you do! Rabbi, it's going to be hard, and maybe dangerous. And I'm not sure you're up to it. There, I've said it. (Beat.) I'm sorry. I kept on hoping that something would change--

YOUNG RABBI turns away, crushed. A pause.

MARY (cont'd)

Do you wanna say something? (Beat.) Joe..."Til death do us part." I take that very seriously. We make this mistake now and we regret it every single day for the rest of our lives.

SHE waits a moment for a response. Nothing. SHE turns away.

YOUNG RABBI

You're right! We could be making a terrible mistake! But not the one you're worried about.

(singing:)

EVERY SINGLE DAY
WE'LL REMEMBER
WHAT WE DO TODAY.
WORDS WE DIDN'T SAY
WE'LL REMEMBER
EVERY SINGLE DAY!
AND YEARS GO BY
TO WONDER WHY
AND WONDER WHAT WE LEARNED.
WAS THAT THE BRIDGE WE SHOULD'A CROSSED,
THAT ONE WE BURNED?
EVERY EMPTY NIGHT
TO REGRET A
LIFE THAT COULD HAVE BEEN
MAYBE YOU WERE RIGHT.
JUST FORGET THAT
EMPTINESS WITHIN.
SO IF YOU GO,
BEFORE THAT MOMENT'S GONE
LOOK AT ME THE WAY
I'LL REMEMBER
EVERY SINGLE DAY
FROM NOW ON!
YOU DESERVE...I DUNNO...
WHAT?... THE MAN I'D LOVE TO BE
THAT'S NOT THE WAY IT TURNED OUT.
NO, YOU FELL IN LOVE WITH ME!
EVERYTHING YOU DOUBT,
I WILL FIGHT FOR
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

YOUNG RABBI

EVERY SINGLE DAY.
HELP ME WORK IT OUT--
MAKE IT RIGHT FOR
EVERY SINGLE DAY.
BUT THIS I SWEAR, AND STAKE MY LIFE UPON--
IF YOU GO OR STAY
I WILL LOVE YOU
AS I DO TODAY
AND I'LL LOVE YOU
EVERY SINGLE DAY
FROM NOW ON!

There's an anxious pause. YOUNG RABBI gestures, "So?"

MARY

Oh, God help us!

SHE rushes into YOUNG RABBI's arms. THEY kiss. The music swells and then segues to elegant nightclub music.

SEGUE: SCENE 5

SCENE 5: THE BARBARINA CLUB

Backstage. HARRY, BOBBY, ERICH and CHOPIN undress.

CHOPIN

I wanna live in that bathroom! I've never seen anything like it! There's stuff in there I don't even know what it's for!

ERICH

It's called a sink.

YOUNG RABBI enters, carrying a paper bag.

YOUNG RABBI

It's so fancy! Did you see the crowd? Von-this and von-that. What will they make of us?! My stomach is in knots. (Beat:) Where's Lesh?

CHOPIN

He's in Ezra's office, getting the tuxes.

BOBBY

The tuxes. Don't remind me. Every last mark we had. And several of Erich's. (To YOUNG RABBI:) I think my stomach's going now. Is that bicarbonate in there?

YOUNG RABBI

Chopped liver.

HARRY

Did you see the posters? Swell, huh?

BOBBY

But the new name, Harry. The Harmonistststs? I can't say it without spitting! I liked The Melody Makers.

CHOPIN

I liked The Harmony Boys.

HARRY

You know the rules. All votes have to be unanimous. And I'm telling you now, I still don't like The Harmony Boys. We're not boys.

BOBBY

Okay, then I'm telling you now that I withdraw my vote for the Harmonists. There. It's not unanimous.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HARRY
(getting heated)
You can't do that.

BOBBY
(angrily:)
I just did.

ERICH
Fellas! Let there be harmony where there
is discord!

YOUNG RABBI
St. Francis of Assisi!

ERICH
Very good... Rabbi!

YOUNG RABBI
Oh sure. I keep up with the competition.

LESH and EZRA KAPLAN enter.

LESH
They're gone! The tuxedos! Stolen!

BOBBY
What?! What the hell happened?!

EZRA
I locked them in my office last night.
Someone broke in. The bastards got my
petty cash and your suits.

LESH
And they wrote all over the walls...
horrible things.

EZRA
Anti-Semitic garbage. Same old drivel
they've been writing for centuries.

BOBBY
You're responsible, Kaplan!

EZRA
Now you wait a minute...

HARRY
Hold on. Let me think...

A waitress with a seltzer bottle enters.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HARRY (cont'd)
(staring at a pants-less BOBBY
and the seltzer bottle)
Wait! Ezra, can you get us six waiter's
uniforms?

EZRA
Sure. But I don't know about the fit.

HARRY
Doesn't matter. Please, get'em.

EZRA exits. HARRY paces, deep in thought. To HIMSELF:

HARRY (cont'd)
What if...what if... Ha! Wait, we need
props. And a chump. And Ezra. Ezra!

ALL
What?!

Perspective shifts to the showroom. Fanfare. EZRA enters.

EZRA
Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the
Barbarina Club! Countess von Stauffen-
berg! So nice to see you! Yes, well...
Tonight, I am delighted to introduce an
exciting new singing group that, I am
proud to say, I discovered.

WE hear a crash from behind the curtain, and muffled voices.

EZRA (cont'd)
(nervous laugh, then:)
Please welcome The Harmisists...
Harmono... Harmisi... Goodness! That's
hard to say! The Harmonists!

The GROUP enters terrified, standing behind tables.

HARRY
Okay, Lesh. Hit it.

LESH
HEAVENS! THERE YOU ARE MY DEAR!
DARE I LOOK YOUR WAY?
I KNOW WHAT YOU WANT TO HEAR...

THE GROUP
WORDS I CANNOT SAY--
HOW CAN I SERVE YOU, MADAME?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

 CHOPIN
I CAN'T MY DEAR TO BE SO NEAR
WOULD RAVAGE MY HEART.

 THE GROUP
OH HOW CAN I SERVE YOU, MADAME?

 ERICH
THE WHOLE AFFAIR WOULD TEAR ME APART.

 THE GROUP
ALTHOUGH I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU,

 LESH
I SEE MY FATE IS ONLY BUT TO WAIT--
AS WAITER'S DO.

 YOUNG RABBI
WHAT CHANCE IS THERE YOU'D HAVE ME
THE WAY I AM?

 THE GROUP
HOW CAN I SERVE YOU, MADAME?

BOBBY is nudged out. HE'S NOT WEARING PANTS.

 BOBBY
HOW CAN I SERVE YOU, MA'MSELLE?
IF WHAT I DO TO PLEASURE YOU
EXPOSES MY LOVE?

ERICH hands him a saucer-sized plate as a fig leaf.

 BOBBY (cont'd)
NO! HOW CAN I SERVE YOU, MA'MSELLE?
I THINK YOU'D SEE WHAT I'M THINKING OF!

 LESH
I THINK SHE SEES IT!

ERICH emerges using a huge platter as a fig leaf.

 ERICH
THERE'S SO MUCH I'M HIDING, CHERIE!

 YOUNG RABBI
Big talker!

 ERICH
AND IF I DARED TO LET IT ALL BE BARED
OH WHAT YOU'D SEE!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

 THE GROUP
INSTEAD I'LL HIDE MY PAIN
THOUGH I FEAR IT SHOWS.
THIS LOVE I FEEL JUST GROWS AND GROWS

 ERICH
GIVEN HOW UNDONE I AM--

 THE GROUP
HOW CAN I SERVE YOU, MADAME?

 BOBBY
Dinner is served.

THEY dance.

 LESH
AS HAMLET SAID
IN VERSE FASHIONED BY THE BARD
I'M HOISTED BY MY OWN...(bump) PETARD!

 THE GROUP
Ouch. (offstage)
DARLING I SUFFER, IT'S JUST TOO HARD!
HOW CAN I SERVE YOU.....

 LESH
MA.....DAME?!!

 THE GROUP
MADAME?!!

MUSIC BUTTON. The GROUP bows & exits as RABBI rushes on in his boxers. The lights shift.

 RABBI
What a night! We sang everything we knew!
And after that night, well, it was a fast
train. Suddenly, we were The Comedian
Harmonists!

A pool of light reveals CHOPIN at his piano. RUTH enters:

 RUTH
 (holding something behind HER
 back, singing:)
LOOK! LOOK AT THE STARS
HOW BRILLIANT THEY ARE!
HOW CAN THEY BE SHINING NOW...
 (revealing a 78rpm)
Baby, look! It's out!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHOPIN

(reading the label:)

"The Comedian Harmonists. Stars in the Night. Music by Erwin Bootz. Lyrics and arrangement by Harry Frommerman." Wow. This is really somethin'. But Erwin Bootz?

RUTH

It's perfect. I am so very proud of you.

CHOPIN

I love you, baby.

THEY embrace and kiss.

RABBI

Funny, you can plan and plan, think things through all you want, be a regular Albert Einstein about it...and then ya sing a waltz in your underpants and everything changes!

(beat)

Where was I...

CHOPIN

I know I'm not the prince you waited for. But I promise I will do the best I can and will always be there for you. Ruthie, marry me.

THEY embrace and kiss once more. RABBI notices:

RABBI

Oh, yes. Oh, yes!

SEGUE: SCENE 6

SCENE 6: THE BERLIN SYNAGOGUE 1931

A stained glass window. The SYNAGOGUE RABBI enters, in full rabbinical regalia. HE is RABBI. A CANTOR is revealed in the house right box.

RABBI
ADONAI LIY LO IYRA

CANTOR
ADONAI LIY LO IYRA

RABBI
MAHYA ASEH LIY ADHAM

CANTOR
MAHYA ASEH LIY ADHAM

BOTH
ADONAI LIY LO IYRA. OMayN.

The CONGREGATION enters, chanting. The chuppah is brought on by the four other GROUP members. The grooms, YOUNG RABBI and CHOPIN, take their places. The brides, RUTH and Mary, enter.

RABBI
AS YOU ENTER THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL
MAY YOU FIND HAPPINESS AND PEACE

ALL
OMAYN.

CHOPIN
EVERY SINGLE DAY
'TIL THIS MOMENT,
THIS IS WHAT I DREAMED.
WE WOULD FIND A WAY
TO THIS MOMENT,
CRAZY AS IT SEEMED.

The glasses are passed to the MEN who drink as:

RUTH
THE GOD I KNOW
WOULD SURELY SHOW US HOW.
LOOK, WE FOUND A WAY!
AND WILL ALWAYS,
EVERY SINGLE DAY,
STARTING NOW!

The glasses are passed to the WOMEN.

MARY
LOOK AT US--
WHO'D HAVE THOUGHT?
IT'S A MIRACLE TO ME.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

 YOUNG RABBI
GOD ONLY KNOWS, BUT SOMEHOW
THIS WAS ALWAYS MEANT TO BE.

 YOUNG RABBI &
 MARY
EVERY SINGLE DAY
FROM THIS MOMENT
WE WILL BE AS ONE.

 CHOPIN & RUTH
MAY THE WORDS WE SAY
AT THIS MOMENT
NEVER BE UNDONE.

 BOTH COUPLES
THE GLASS IS FILLED
WITH HOPE TO BUILD UPON!

The glasses are wrapped and placed at the feet of the grooms.

 MARY AND YOUNG
 RABBI
MAY WE FIND OUR WAY
AS I LOVE YOU,

 CHOPIN AND RUTH
HONOR AND OBEY,
AND WILL LOVE YOU,

 ALL
EVERY SINGLE DAY.....

THE GROOMS smash the cups.

SEGUE: SCENE 7

SCENE 7: A TOUR OF THE WORLD 1932-1933

On the screens, A NAZI LEADER speaks to a large CROWD.

NAZI LEADER

The election results have been tallied.
The Catholic Center Party has won seventy
seats in the Reichstag. The Communists,
eighty-three. The Social Democrats, one
hundred twenty-two. And our National
Socialists have won two hundred forty-
three seats!

There is a cheer from the crowd. Suddenly the GROUP appears.
ERICH steps forward:

ERICH

Hello London! We are the Comedian
Harmonists!

THE GROUP

(singing, sotto voce:)
HARMONY! WE SING IN HARMONY!
LIKE THE ROBINS IN LEICESTER SQUARE...

The NAZI LEADER reappears.

NAZI LEADER

President Hindenburg has appointed our
Fuhrer Chancellor! (A cheer.) And our
Fuhrer has assembled a coalition
government! One people!

NAZI LEADER &
CROWD

One Germany! One Fuhrer!

A pool of light comes up on RUTH, TITUS and CLARA handing out
leaflets:

TITUS

Say 'no' to fascism!

RUTH

Say 'yes' to equality!

CLARA

Say, 'no' to the Nazi thugs!

RUTH

Say 'yes' to justice!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RUTH, TITUS AND
CLARA
Save the German nation!

The GROUP reappears. LESH steps forward:

LESH
Bon soir, Paree! Nous sommes Les
Harmonists Comedian!

THE GROUP
Un, deux, trois, quatre, cinq, six, tout
le monde!

The NAZI LEADER reappears:

THE GROUP (cont'd)	NAZI
(singing, sotto voce:)	The Reichsministry of finance
MAIS CELUI	has ordered a one day strike
QUI A L'HARMONIE	of all Jewish shops and
EST CELUI	businesses. Tomorrow, all
QUI N'A PAS L'ENNUI...	Germans are forbidden to
	obtain goods and services
	from Jews. Heil Hitler!

The CROWD chants "Seig Heil!" RUTH, CLARA and TITUS reappear.

TITUS AND CLARA
Save the German nation!

RUTH
This is our time!

TITUS AND CLARA
Save the German nation!

RUTH
This is our time!

ALL THREE
Save the German nation!

Their chant and the 'seig heils' become more insistent. The GROUP reappears. YOUNG RABBI steps forward

YOUNG RABBI
Hello New York! We are The Comedian
Harmonists!

The Nazi and Bolshevik rallies black out.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THE GROUP
IN THIS JOINT
ALL ENCOUNTERS WITH COUNTERPOINT
END IN HARMONY.
AND IT'S CLEAR
NO MAN'S A SOLO HERE.
NOT EVEN ME! ME! ME! ME! ME! ME!
NO SOLO MIO!
JUST HARMONY.

Photographers and reporters rush on. In rapid fire:

REPORTER #1
How long will you be in America?

HARRY
We're excited to hear what Mr. Hurok has
to say.

PHOTOGRAPHER #1
To your left, please. Great.

REPORTER #2
Any offers for an American
radio deal?

HARRY (cont'd)
You'll be the first to know.

A WOMAN'S VOICE is heard from the CROWD:

VOICE
I have a question, s'il vous plait.

THE GROUP cannot pinpoint the source of THE VOICE. A clump of
REPORTERS/PHOTOGRAPHERS parts to reveal JOSEPHINE BAKER.

JOSEPHINE
(very 'Josephine of Paris':)
Would you gentlemen consider performing
with the magnificent, the dazzling, the
incomparable Josephine Baker?

YOUNG RABBI
I can't believe my eyes.

LESH crosses to HER as the flash bulbs become frenzied.

LESH
Ari Leshnikoff, Comedian Harmonist.

JOSEPHINE
Josephine Baker, black goddess of France.
Enchantez.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REPORTER #1

Miss Baker! Miss Baker, what brings you to New York?

JOSEPHINE

A dear friend made his Carnegie Hall debut tonight. How could I miss that?

SHE crosses, finally stopping at ERICH. HER free gloved hand caresses his face. Now SHE is more 'Josephine of North St. Louis.'

JOSEPHINE (cont'd)

Erich, sweet thing, I hope I have been a good friend.

THEY kiss. Flashes become even more frenzied.

LESH

Wow.

CHOPIN

Erich, my man! You and your secrets.

REPORTER #1

Miss Baker, is it true you will be appearing in the new Ziegfeld Follies?

JOSEPHINE

Appearing? Mais non. La Baker does not 'appear.' But she may very well be *starring* in the new Ziegfeld Follies.

ERICH

A new Ziegfeld Follies? Really?

JOSEPHINE

Yes. I have an idea. Josephine Baker starring in the New Ziegfeld Follies with The Comedian Harmonists. We'll talk more at the party.

ERICH

Till the party, then.

JOSEPHINE

And then after the party...

THEY kiss once more.

LESH

Ooh-la-la.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOBBY

Okay, thank you, everybody. If you all would excuse us, we need to change and head to that party. Thank you, thank you.

JOSEPHINE

This way, madame et messieurs. I always exit stage right. This is my good side.

PHOTOGRAPHER #2

Lady, you don't have a bad side.

SHE and the PRESS exit. One REPORTER, lags behind, back to US. HE removes his hat and turns to US. HE is RABBI.

SEGUE: SCENE 8

SCENE 8: CARNEGIE HALL DRESSING ROOM, DECEMBER 1933

RABBI

New York! What a night that was. In the dressing room there were flowers everywhere ... champagne...telegrams... the most gorgeous deli platter you ever saw...

YOUNG RABBI

(with a mouthful of pastrami)
Oh my God...

RABBI

(HIS mood darkens a bit:)
Yes. That night, I remember...

HE exits. The dressing room. The GROUP and MARY are present. CHOPIN is on the telephone. LESH begins to change clothes.

CHOPIN

Wow...really?
(to the OTHERS:)
Ruth says Hindenburg is battling with the Nazis... Hitler's government will fall in weeks and... the old man will call for new elections. (To RUTH:) Ruthie, be careful...I love you, baby. Yes, she's here.(To MARY:) Mary, she wants to talk to you.

MARY

It's so expensive!

LESH

Talk all you want. We're rich! And we're famous! Look at these--
(reading telegrams:)
Mayor Fiorello La Guardia, Fanny Brice, Will Rogers, Gypsy Rose Lee!

BOBBY

(to ERICH)
Are we really this famous? Or are these more of your friends.

CHOPIN

I still can't believe it. Erich and Josephine Baker!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

YOUNG RABBI
Who else did you have out there tonight?
Eleanor Roosevelt?

ERICH
How would I know Eleanor Roosevelt?

A knock at the door. ERICH, beaming, signals LESH to open it.

ERICH (cont'd)
Don't just stand there. Let Eleanor in!

LESH
(opening the door)
Oh my God!!

EINSTEIN enters. HE is RABBI.

EINSTEIN
Albert Einstein.

LESH
Ari Leshnikoff, Comedian Harmonist.

As LESH extends a hand, his pants drop.

EINSTEIN
What a splendid example of the laws of
gravity! You are the remarkable tenor.
That was a high E above C, wasn't it? In
the ballad?

LESH
I...I...

CHOPIN
The ballads are the slow ones, Lesh. (To
EINSTEIN:) They call me Chopin.

EINSTEIN
Aha! The second great pianist with that
name.

ERICH
Albie!
(crossing to HIM)
Albie...

EINSTEIN
Erich! My boy...

As THEY embrace, the OTHERS physically express their
disbelief.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERICH

Let me introduce you. Rabbi Josef Roman Cykowski.

YOUNG RABBI

An honor, sir. My wife, Mary.

MARY

(into the phone:)

I'm not joking! It's really him!

There's an audible scream coming through the phone.

CHOPIN

And my wife, Ruth.

EINSTEIN

(shouting)

A pleasure to meet you!

Another audible scream from the phone.

ERICH

Harry Frommerman.

EINSTEIN

Ah yes. The man with the ideas.

ERICH

And Robert Biberti.

BOBBY

It's wonderful to meet you. We were just saying how we missed our German friends.

EINSTEIN

I'm becoming an American now, Mr. Biberti.

BOBBY

American? But surely you'll return to Germany after the current situation changes.

EINSTEIN

After the current 'situation' changes, I wonder if there will be a Germany.

YOUNG RABBI

You think it's that bad?

EINSTEIN

Yes. Don't you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LESH

Sir, we haven't been in Germany for over a year. We've been touring.

EINSTEIN

Have you been reading?

(gently:)

The world will not be destroyed by those who do evil, but by those who watch them and do nothing.

BOBBY

With all due respect, there have been, what, dozens of governments in the past few years. What makes you think this one will last?

EINSTEIN

Mr. Biberti, throughout the course of history, the failure of democracies has set the stage for the success of tyrants. Greed and hatred is a proven formula for success. In the short term, at least. An unfortunate legacy for our species.

ERICH

'How can tyrants safely govern home?'

EINSTEIN

Ah. Shakespeare.

MARY

What has it been like for you, emigrating?

EINSTEIN

Difficult. But, I have come to think that in every difficulty there is an opportunity. Have you been considering it? (Beat:) I was seated tonight next to several executives from... N, B..C? In your field these are influential men? Yes? They are most interested in you. (Beat:) Ah. I fear I have put a damper on your magnificent evening.

ALL EXCEPT BOBBY

No...no.

EINSTEIN

And magnificent it was! I shall not forget it! My regards to the family, Erich. Good night.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HE 'exits' scene but crosses down and slowly transforms into RABBI again. Music rumbles. (RABBI's lines alone are sung:)

MARY
Will NBC be at the party tonight?

ERICH
I'm quite sure.

RABBI
(singing:)
WE SHOULD TALK TO THEM.

YOUNG RABBI
We should talk to them.

HARRY
Yes. We definitely should.

CHOPIN
Hell. I dunno.

RABBI
THERE'S NO HARM IN TALKING.

LESH
There's no harm in talking.

CHOPIN
Sure.

THEY all turn to BOBBY. A beat.

BOBBY
No.

HARRY
Whaddaya mean, 'no'.
That's it?!

ERICH
Bobby, we'll just talk.
No one's making any
moves yet.

LESH
Yes, Bobby.
All we do
is talk.

CHOPIN
Wait. Let him speak.

RABBI
THEY DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOOD FOR US.

BOBBY
They don't know what's good for us.

HARRY
And you do.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOBBY

Yes.

MARY

Bobby, we're not children. We can hear what they have to say, talk it through, and then we decide.

BOBBY

We? I don't remember you having a vote.

MARY

You're right. This is your decision. You decide. And then Rabbi and I will decide.

SHE exits.

RABBI

THAT WASN'T RIGHT. DAMN YOU, BOBBY!

YOUNG RABBI

That wasn't right. Damn you, Bobby!

BOBBY

You all heard what Ruth said. And she's there! It's gonna blow over.

HARRY

And if it doesn't? I say we talk to these guys and know what our choices are.

RABBI

LET'S PUT IT TO A VOTE.

HARRY

Let's put it to a vote. And remember, it has to be unanimous or we...

BOBBY

You're doing it! You're pissing it all away! Just like I always knew you would!

RABBI

ALL IN FAVOR...

HARRY

All in favor...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOBBY

No!! No, I will not let you do this,
Harry!

(HE sings:)

THIS IS HOW IT STARTS!
THIS IS HOW PEOPLE LIKE US GET HOT AND
BLOW IT!
AND YOU KNOW IT!
COMMON SENSE DEPARTS,
LEAVING A RIOT OF RUMORS, LIES AND
DOUBTS.
DO WE GIVE OUR HEARTS
TO AMERICANS WAITING
TO HATE THE INVADING
INTRUDERS?
WE'RE THE FILTHY POLLUTERS--
"SILLY GERMANS
WITH THEIR ACCENTS...
WHAT A BUNCH'A RIDICULOUS KATZENJAMMER
KRAUTS!"
THEY TOSS A BOUQUET,
THEN TOSS US AWAY.
NO! I SAY WE ALL JUST GO HOME!
HOME, WHERE THEY KNOW US.
AND WE'RE TOGETHER
UNDER A SKY THAT FOUND A SPACE
TO PLACE OUR STAR
(To CHOPIN:)
HOME, WHERE THEY LOVE US
AND WHERE IT'S OUR TIME!
IT'S WHY WE HAPPENED
IT'S WHO WE ARE
YES, I SAY WE GO HOME

CHOPIN

Harry?

BOBBY

MAYBE WE SHOULD QUIT.
MAYBE THERE REALLY IS MORE TO LIFE
WITHOUT IT.
OH, I DOUBT IT.
WE COULD ALWAYS SPLIT--
SOME OF US STAY, OR WE GO OUR SEPARATE
WAYS.
SAY 'THE HELL WITH IT--'
(to ERICH)
YOU COULD HURRY BACK TO THE INFIRMARY
(to YOUNG RABBI)
YOU, TO THE SHTETL.
(to ALL)
DO YA THINK WE COULD SETTLE?
(to LESH)
WAITIN' TABLES,
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOBBY (cont'd)

(to CHOPIN)
PLAYIN' BROTHELS,
(to ALL)
AND THE MEMORIES RATTLE AROUND US ALL OUR
DAYS--
DON'T TOPPLE THE THRONE!
JUST LEAVE IT ALONE!
HELL, I SAY WE ALL JUST GO HOME!
HOME WHERE THEY KNOW US.
AND WE'RE TOGETHER.
UNDER A SKY THAT FOUND A SPACE
TO PLACE OUR STAR.

BOBBY

HOME, WHERE THEY KNOW US

CHOPIN

IT'S STILL HOME.

AND WE'RE TOGETHER

CHOPIN/ERICH

IT'S OUR HOME

UNDER A SKY THAT FOUND
A SPACE TO PLACE OUR STAR
HOME WHERE THEY LOVE US

THERE'S ONLY ONE

TIMES WILL CHANGE

AND WHERE IT'S OUR TIME!

THERE'S TIME TO RUN

IT'S WHY WE HAPPENED
IT'S WHO WE ARE. YES,

AT HOME WE CAN CHANGE IT

BOBBY, ERICH &
CHOPIN

I SAY WE GO HOME.

RABBI

YOU COULD HAVE DONE IT.
YOU COULD HAVE STOPPED IT.
BUT NO! NOTHING!
WHAT WERE YOU THINKING?
WASN'T IT CLEAR? DIDN'T YOU KNOW?
NO! YES! NO!
DO IT! DO IT!
NOTHING TO IT! NOTHING!
YOU DID NOTHING!
ALL YOU DO IS TURN AROUND
AND THEN YOU SAY IT..."NO!
WE CAN'T GO!" AND WE DON'T GO!
BUT NO! NOTHING!
SAY IT! "IT'S NOT HOME, FELLAS!
HOME'S NOT THERE!"
STOP 'EM! DO IT! DAMN IT!
TELL THEM WHAT YOU KNOW, NOW!
QUICK, BEFORE THE MOMENT
HARRY TURNED TO ME AND...

HARRY turns to YOUNG RABBI.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

 YOUNG RABBI
Let's go home.

The GROUP embrace. The set breaks away revealing an ominous sky.

 THE SIX
WE'LL GO HOME
IT'S OUR HOME TOO--
OUR HOME!
OUR HOME!

 RABBI
ADONAI....!
STOP THEM NOW
OR YOU'LL REGRET IT
ALL YOUR LIFE!

YOUNG RABBI raises his arm as if to call out to the OTHERS as RABBI shouts:

 RABBI
NO!!

As:

THE CURTAIN FALLS ON ACT I

ACT II SCENE 1: THE ZIEGFELD FOLLIES OF 1934, NEW YORK

As the ENTR'ACTE climaxes, a statuesque man in top hat, tails and cane steps out. HE is the ZIEGFELD MASTER OF CEREMONIES.

ZIEGFELD MASTER
OF CEREMONIES

Ladies and gentlemen! Tonight, it is my pleasure to introduce The New Ziegfeld Follies of 1934 starring The Comedian Harmonists and Miss Josephine Baker!

ZIEGFELD FOLLIES
ENSEMBLE

(offstage:)

AI! AI! AI!
THE WORLD IS LOCO!
AI! AI! AI!
COMPLETELY LOCO!
AI! AI! AI!
SO CRAZY LOCO!
AI! AI!
AI! AI!!
WE'RE GOIN' LOCO!

JOSEPHINE and THE GROUP enter to the frenzy of samba drums:

JOSEPHINE
WE'RE GOIN' LOCO!

THE GROUP
AI! AI! AI!

JOSEPHINE
SO CUCKOO LOCO!

THE GROUP
AI! AI! AI!

YOUNG RABBI
HOLY MACKEREL!

JOSEPHINE
OY GEVALT!

ERICH
E AI CARAMBA!

FULL COMPANY
THE WORLD IS GOIN' LOCO!
FOR SAMBA! AI!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOSEPHINE
IT MAKES RESPECTABLE CIVILIANS
LIKE THOSE MILLIONS
OF BRAZILIANS
FEEL THE URGE TO PUT FEATHERS ON
AND GO DANCING IN THE STREET.

THE GROUP
AI! AI!

JOSEPHINE AND THE
GROUP
THAT'S WHEN THE SAMBA TAKES HOLD
OF YOUR HEART AND YOUR FEET!
WE'RE GOIN LOCO!
AI! AI! AI!
SO WACKY LOCO!
AI! AI! AI!!

BOBBY
NOT FOR MAMBO,

JOSEPHINE
OR THE RHUMBA,

LESH
OR LA BAMBA...

JOSEPHINE AND THE
GROUP
THE WORLD IS GOIN' LOCO...FOR SAMBA!

THEY ALL dance.

JOSEPHINE AND
WOMEN
WE'RE GOIN' LOCO!

THE GROUP AND MEN
AI! AI! AI!!

JOSEPHINE AND
WOMEN
SO CUCKOO LOCO!

THE GROUP AND MEN
AI! AI! AI!!

ALL EXCEPT
JOSEPHINE
HOLY MACKEREL!

JOSEPHINE
OY GEVALT!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALL EXCEPT
JOSEPHINE
E AI CARAMBA!

ALL
THE WORLD IS GOIN' LOCO

LESH AND HARRY
LOCO

WOMEN
LOCO

ALL
THE WORLD IS GOIN' LOCO

WOMEN
LOCO

YOUNG RABBI AND
CHOPIN
LOCO

The tone begins to shift. Lighting becomes more stark and angular, music more dissonant. The gangway from the end of ACT ONE descends. RABBI appears. As the dance looks as if it is about to spin out of control, HE shouts:

RABBI
NO!!

THE CAST OF THE ZIEGFELD FOLLIES freezes.

RABBI (cont'd)
We went back. We went back!

ALL but RABBI exit.

RABBI (cont'd)
We went back. Was it ever not as obvious as it is now? We were so young...Ach! (Beat.) So much for New York. And then...Berlin. (Beat:) Berlin Philharmonic Hall. We went back as 'international celebrities'. It seemed Bobby was right. Sure, there were new big shots around...

STANDARTENFUHRER and HIS WIFE appear and take their seats.

RABBI (cont'd)
....But it seemed, then, anyway, that it was just more of the same. Same old hate. Just different costumes.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RABBI (cont'd)

(HE hears a Hungarian theme:)
Yes, the rhapsody! Richard Strauss asked us to headline at a benefit at the Philharmonic. Very high-brow. He asked if Harry had an idea about what we could perform.

("What a silly question:")
Did Harry have an idea...

RABBI exits. HARRY enters across stage, speaking to RICHARD STRAUSS who, we assume, is following close behind.

HARRY

Maestro, we have something special in mind for the Philharmonic benefit.

HARRY turns to where STRAUSS is supposed to be. No STRAUSS.

STRAUSS

(offstage)
Tell Toscanini I'll call him later.
(entering, out of breath:)
You were... saying?

HARRY

Yes, Maestro, we would like to perform Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsody number twenty.

STRAUSS

Number twenty? Harry, you must be mistaken. Franz Liszt only wrote nineteen Hungarian Rhapsodies.

HARRY

Precisely!

HARRY exits. RABBI sheds part of his STRAUSS drag:

RABBI

Ha! Think of it as... the last Liszt.
The... lost Liszt. The...least Liszt.

HE exits.

SEGUE: SCENE 2

SCENE 2: BERLIN PHILHARMONIC HALL, 1934

THE GROUP enters, carrying invisible instruments. THEY "play" Lizst's **HUNGARIAN RHAPSODY #20**, with LESH as featured 'violin' soloist, full of melodrama in the languid parts, and blistering pyrotechnics in the fast sections. On the applause, the GROUP initiates an encore. Suddenly, several NAZI YOUTH jump to their feet in the house:

 YOUNG NAZI
Jew music!! Jew music!!

 YOUNG NAZI #2
Down with Jew music!!

 YOUNG NAZI #3
Bolshevik swine! The Jews are
our misfortune!

 YOUNG NAZI (cont'd)
This is Berlin, not Budapest!

 YOUNG NAZI #2
Gypsy trash!

 YOUNG NAZI #3 (cont'd)
Garbage!

 YOUNG NAZI
Jew music!!

 YOUNG NAZI#2
Degenerate Jew music!!

 YOUNG NAZI#3
Save Germany from the Jews!

 YOUNG NAZI
Filthy gypsy rubbish!

 YOUNG NAZI #2
Jew music!

 YOUNG NAZI #3
Jew music!

 ALL THREE
The Jews are our misfortune!!!

The on-stage action stops. STANDARTENFUHRER rises in the front row.

 STANDARTENFUHRER
Silence!

 BOBBY
Stay calm.

 STANDARTENFUHRER
This is a shameful display! Have you
orders to do this?! Leave at once! Go!
(To The GROUP:) My apologies to all of
you...and your fans. Please... continue.
(To the HARRY:) Maestro!

The ORCHESTRA plays. We shift to backstage. MARY enters.

 MARY
Oh my God! Are you alright?!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

YOUNG RABBI

Shh. I'm fine. The pogroms were much worse.

MARY

I've never been so frightened in my life.

CHOPIN

Mary, wasn't Ruth sitting with you?

MARY

She got so upset. She ran into the street after them. I tried to stop her, but...

HARRY

That pompous bully. Cueing me! Why didn't he just shoot at our feet and order us to dance!

BOBBY sees STANDARTENFUHRER and his WIFE, INGRID, entering.

BOBBY

Harry! (To STANDARTENFUHRER:) Standartenfuhrer! Our deepest gratitude.

STANDARTENFUHRER

An outrageous incident. I am so sorry.

CHOPIN

We didn't know what to expect. After all two of us... (HE catches himself.)

STANDARTENFUHRER

Are Jewish. Yes. We know.

RUTH enters. RUTH is looking as if SHE has been in a scuffle.

RUTH

Those Barbarians make me sick.

CHOPIN

Ruthie! Poor baby, look at you!
(embracing HER, then:)
Standartenfuhrer, my wife, Ruth.

STANDARTENFUHRER

Oh, forgive me, dear. And this is my wife...Ingrid.

INGRID

How delightfully informal!

STANDARTENFUHRER

We have several of your recordings.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

INGRID

We have all of your recordings.

(Handing BOBBY a disc:)

And this one is my favorite. Could I possibly prevail upon you brilliantly talented gentleman to autograph it?

BOBBY

An honor. (Reading the label, to the OTHERS:) Stars in the Night.

STANDARTENFUHRER

We are fans, you see. And I say this as a fan, not in any official capacity. This gypsy music tonight-- it's very humorous, but the Third Reich does not celebrate gypsies. Quite the contrary.

BOBBY

Sir, we understand. It's out of the act.

HARRY

What?! Now wait...

ERICH

Standartenfuhrer, Maestro Strauss himself-- a good friend of mine...

STANDARTENFUHRER

Ah, you haven't heard. Maestro Strauss has just been appointed President of the Reichsministry of Music.

INGRID

He was the Fuhrer's personal choice!

STANDARTENFUHRER

As a matter of fact, it was Maestro Strauss who suggested I speak with you.

BOBBY

Consider it done. Once again, we are deeply in your debt.

STANDARTENFUHRER

No. The Third Reich is in your debt. We have alarmed many of our neighbors in these few short months since we've begun. But who could be fearful of the Germany that you so brilliantly represent. Your performances in other nations are proving to be a great asset to our cause. You are our... ambassadors of good will! And now, less weighty subjects-- would you honor us by joining us for supper?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOBBY

All of us?

RUTH

Not me, I'm afraid. This Jew bitch is sick enough.

CHOPIN

Ruthie! (To STANDARTENFUHRER:) Please forgive her. She's so upset. We're all so upset and...

STANDARTENFUHRER

(Shushing CHOPIN:) I see. (Beat.) I trust this is an unnecessary warning, but you should know your bank accounts are being closely monitored. I would suggest you not make any substantial withdrawals, especially prior to one of your 'diplomatic' tours of other countries.

HE and INGRID cross to exit. BOBBY runs after them. The following happens out of earshot of the others.

BOBBY

Standartenfuhrer! Now it is I who must apologize. They were so frightened...

STANDARTENFUHRER

Robert. Cultural matters are not in my purview. My domain--this is a bit unpleasant, I know--my domain is the tracking down of abortionists and homosexuals. That said, I would be happy to walk across the hall to cultural affairs and drop a good word. But what's the worst that can happen? You rid yourself of two Jews? (Seeing BOBBY is upset:) I'll be sure to keep you informed. And... perhaps you could do the same for me? For instance, the name of that woman again?

BOBBY

Which...woman?

STANDARTENFUHRER

Ah. Never mind.

HE exits. ALL unfreeze though BOBBY is paralyzed:

MARY

Somebody say something. Please. What are we going to do?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

YOUNG RABBI

Harry?

ERICH

This can't last. It's perverse. People are sure to see that. My God, we're talking about the German people, not some uncivilized...

RUTH

What German people, Erich?! Where have they been? And aren't they... us?

YOUNG RABBI

We become their ambassadors? They're using us.

LESH

My God, what's happening?

HARRY

The whole damn world is turning to shit, that's what's happening!

(crossing to RUTH, taking HER hands:)

And good for you, Ruth!

CHOPIN

(pulling RUTH away;)

Good for her?! Harry! Have you lost your goddamned mind!

RUTH

Oh go to hell! You make me sick the way you licked his boots! Dammit, Erwin, stand for something!!

CHOPIN

Jesus Christ! We could have been arrested! Would that make you happy?!

YOUNG RABBI

Enough! Both of you!

LESH

Arrested? For what? What did we do?

HARRY

Let's do an encore! The gypsy number! Raise the curtain!! There are still some stragglers out there, maybe even a few music-loving Nazi bastard fans of ours! RAISE THE DAMN CURTAIN! NOW!!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

 CHOPIN ERICH
Harry, goddammit! Restraint.
 MARY We need restraint.
Harry, please!

 RUTH
 (rushing to HIM:)
Harry Listen to me. We'll fight this.

HARRY collapses into RUTH'S arms, much to CHOPIN'S displeasure. YOUNG RABBI approaches THEM cautiously.

 RUTH (cont'd)
Harry. Harry!

 YOUNG RABBI
 ('Look what you're doing':)
Harry.

 RUTH
Harry, listen. We can fight this.

 YOUNG RABBI
 (YOUNG RABBI gently separates
 THEM. To HARRY:)
Where are we booked next?

 HARRY
 (trying to clear the cobwebs:)
Uh..I dunno...Erich?

 ERICH
Copenhagen. Tivoli Park.

 YOUNG RABBI
Good.
They want ambassadors? Let's give 'em
ambassadors.

As THEY exit, RABBI takes center. There is a woosh of sparkling music. Twinkling images of Tivoli appear on the screens.

SEGUE: SCENE 3

SCENE 3: TIVOLI PARK, COPENHAGEN

RABBI appears and opens one of six boxes and removes a MARIONETTE. THE GROUP appears on the boxes, costumed as marionettes with 'strings' ascending into the flies.

THE GROUP

Harry, Bobby, Erich, Rabbi, Chopin, Lesh

HARRY MARIONETTE

WHO CARES HOW THE WIND MAY BLOW?
WE JUST STRING ALONG.
LIFE IS SIMPLE WHEN YOU KNOW,
HAVING RIGHTS IS WRONG.
COME TO THE FATHERLAND
IF YOU'RE A LITTLE SQUIRT.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE DUMB
TO GIVE UP YOUR FREEDOM,

BOBBY MARIONETTE

(entering:)
BUT IT SURE DON'T HURT!

GROUP MARIONETTES

HERE'S TO THE FATHERLAND!
(raspberry)
HERE'S TO THE FOLKS WHO FOLLOW.
CHEERS TO THE FATHERLAND!
(raspberry)
HERE'S TO THE JOKES WE SWALLOW!
COME WHERE THE ARYANS ARE PURER
AND JUMP WHEN THE FUHRER SAYS "BOO!"
COME TO THE FATHERLAND!

BOBBY MARIONETTE

THAT'S DEUTSCHLAND TO YOU!

HARRY MARIONETTE

HERE WE NEVER CHOOSE OR THINK.
TELL US WHERE TO GO.
IF THE LEMMING'S AT THE BRINK,
WE DON'T WANNA KNOW.
COME TO THE FATHERLAND!
THE FUHRER HAS DECREED:
IF YOU'RE ANGLO-SAXON,
AND YOUR HAIR IS FLAXEN,

BOBBY MARIONETTE

WE WANT YOU TO BREED!

GROUP MARIONETTES

HI DEE HI DEE HI DEE HI DEE
HO, HO, HO, HO!
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GROUP MARIONETTES

HAIL TO THE FATHERLAND!!
(raspberry)

YOUNG RABBI &
HARRY
JUST DRINK YOUR BEER IN DEUTSCHLAND!

ALL
TAIL TO THE FATHERLAND!
(raspberry)

HARRY
BUT DON'T BE QUEER IN DEUTSCHLAND!
AND IF YOU'RE GOOD AT TUSHIE-KISSIN'

ALL
OR MAYBE YOU'RE MISSIN' A SCREW,
COME TO THE FATHERLAND!!
UNLESS YOU'RE A JEW!
LA-LA, LA-LA, LA LA LA LA!
COME SEE BAVARIA! AND OKTOBERFEST!
AND THE AUTOBAHN!
COME SEE THE VATICAN, AND OUR BUDAPEST,
AND OUR LENINGRAD, AND OUR PYRAMIDS,
AND OUR PARTHENON, AND OUR EIFFEL TOWER!
SEE THE TULIPS BLOOM IN OUR
AMSTER-AMSTER-DAMN!

BOBBY
WE GET AHEAD OF OURSELVES....

THEY dance.

HARRY
.....BUT IF YOU'RE SO INSANE
THAT YOU'RE SCRATCHIN' AT YOUR HEINIE,
OR BORED BEIN' WHINEY AND BLUE,

THE GROUP
SAIL TO THE FATHERLAND!
THUMB TO THE FATHERLAND!
HAIL TO THE FATHERLAND!
COME TO THE FATHERLAND....

BOBBY MARIONETTE
NO! WE'LL COME TO YOU!!

THEY exit. A GERMAN BORDER GUARD appears in a pool of light.
RABBI enters and approaches HIM.

BORDER GUARD
Passport.
(RABBI hands it to him.)
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BORDER GUARD

You will not be needing this. Your traveling privileges have been revoked. You and your friends are forbidden to leave Germany without special permission from the Reichsministry. (Beat.) Unless, of course, you choose to return to Poland...where you came from. Yes. Why don't you and your kind go back to where you came from.

Lights down on HIM and up on a RADIO ANNOUNCER standing behind a microphone. HE is RABBI. A scratchy recording of funereal music is heard. (Beethoven's Third Symphony, Second Movement.) HE is being closely overseen by an SS OFFICER with the rank of HAUPTSTURMFUHRER, who hands HIM one page of copy to read. The RADIO ANNOUNCER is clearly ill-at-ease. On cue, HE reads:

RADIO ANNOUNCER

We interrupt this broadcast to make the following announcement. Our great leader, President Hindenburg, is dead.

(HE pauses as HE sees the next sentence. The OFFICER moves a step closer to HIM.)

In his honor...in his honor the title of President of Germany will be retired forever. (Beat.) While we mourn the loss of this noble patriot, let us take solace in knowing we are now united behind our only leader... our Fuhrer.

(with great difficulty:)

One people. One Germany. One Fuhrer. Heil Hitler.

A train sound rumbles and crescendos along with the Beethoven as the SS OFFICER rips the page out of the ANNOUNCER'S hand and 'escorts' HIM off. The train sound and funereal music decrescendo and crossfade into an instrumental version of STARS IN THE NIGHT. It sounds as if it is emanating from a radio.

SEGUE: SCENE 4

SCENE 4: A HOTEL IN COLOGNE

Two hotel rooms in Cologne. One is empty. RUTH and MARY are in the other. There's a radio playing. MARY sits on the bed removing a lining from a coat.

MARY

Your husband wrote a very beautiful song.

RUTH turns the radio off.

RUTH

What are they meeting about?

MARY

You don't know?

RUTH

No.

MARY

Plans are being made...for a move.

RUTH

A move? How? We don't have passports.

MARY

That's why they're making this picture. We got the producers to pay in cash. Then maybe we can buy forged papers, and bribe whomever we must. Why don't you know this? Doesn't Chopin tell you these things?

RUTH

No, he doesn't tell me anything! Mary, what am I going to do?!

MARY

Ruthie, how can I tell you...Talk to him.

RUTH

He doesn't exactly enjoy that--getting to the bottom of things. You know him.

MARY

What I know doesn't matter. It's what you know. And...forgive me...but I think you've always known.

(RUTH seems devastated by that.)

Hold on, Ruthie.(Beat.) Sorry, I shouldn't have said anything.

RUTH

No, no...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARY

Listen, I've got a little project for you. Great, you brought your good coat, the Persian lamb.

RUTH

Why? You want me to hock it?

MARY

No. I want you to remove the lining, carefully. We'll sew it back in later, after we stuff the coat with money. Okay? (Beat.) Hey, promise me something. Promise me you won't do anything rash.

RUTH

Rash? Me?

CHOPIN enters. YOUNG RABBI enters an empty room, next door.

MARY

Hi. I should get back to our room. See ya, Ruthie.

RUTH

(To CHOPIN:) How was the meeting?

MARY

(Seeing HIS eyes widen, boldly:)
She knows. I told her.

MARY exits.

RUTH

Relax. No yelling.

CHOPIN

I didn't tell you about the plans for a reason.

RUTH

You had your reasons. So what. Forget it.

Lights come down on THEM and up next door as MARY enters the room.

MARY

Hi. How did it go?

YOUNG RABBI rushes into her arms. THEY kiss. Lights come down on THEM and up next door.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHOPIN

It was wrong to keep this from you. I know. But I needed time to think. The group is trying to figure out what to do. But I thought you and I have to figure out what we're going to do first.

RUTH

What we're going to do? Oh. Of course. It would be so much easier for you, wouldn't it? Not being married to a Jew.

CHOPIN

I didn't say that. That's not it, Ruthie.

RUTH

That's not it? Really? It wouldn't be much easier for you?

CHOPIN

Jesus, Ruth, of course it would be easier! But that's not it! You're just hell bent on having another fight, aren't you! That's all we do lately!

RUTH

And why do we fight? What do we fight about? Money? Having children? What color to paint the bedroom? Never!! We fight because you married a Jew in this lousy Jew-hating country! And you won't stand up to them. That's why we fight!

Lights come up next door.

YOUNG RABBI

They're at it again. Should I go over?

MARY

No. Not this time.

YOUNG RABBI

Mary, at the meeting... we're talking about splitting up...

MARY

Ah. Divorce is in the air.

YOUNG RABBI

It means you and me, Harry, Ruth and maybe Chopin, leaving the country. Your country. You leave your family behind... everything. But me. And Mary, it's dangerous! If we got caught...(Beat.) It's not easy for me to ask you to do that. Do you understand?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARY

(after a beat:)

Where's your Bible? Check your bag.

YOUNG RABBI

What?

MARY

Check your bag. Check your bag!

(HE hands HER the Bible.)

Where's Ruth?

(shaking the book at him)

This Ruth, Rabbi!

YOUNG RABBI

After Song of Songs. Before Lamentations.

MARY

(struck by the irony of that:)

That's fitting. (Beat.) Here it is...

YOUNG RABBI

I know the story, Mary.

MARY

"But Ruth said, 'Entreat me not to leave you or to return from following you; for where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God; where you die I will die, and there will I be buried.'"

(SHE looks up. Then, singing:)

WHERE YOU GO,
I WILL GO.
WHERE YOU WALK,
I'M BESIDE YOU.
MY LOVE, WHERE YOU ARE
IS WHERE I WANT TO BE.
WHERE YOU GO,
WE WILL GO.
MAYBE SCARED,
BUT TOGETHER.
WITH YOU I'M PREPARED.
THE REST IS DESTINY.
WHEN IT STARTS TAKE MY HAND
AND WHETHER IT'S THROUGH HELL OR
TO THE PROMISED LAND--
GOD KNOWS WHERE--
I'LL BE THERE,
WHERE YOU GO.

The lights come up next door. It's after the storm.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RUTH

Funny. I actually feel sorry for you.

CHOPIN

Ruthie, I just want it to end. And I want you to go somewhere and be safe.

RUTH

That's why I feel sorry for you. You think it ends here.

(SHE sings:)

WHERE YOU GO,
I WILL GO,
IN YOUR DREAMS, IN THE SHADOWS,
AND CRUEL AS IT SEEMS
THERE'S NOTHING ENDING HERE.
WHERE I GO,
YOU WILL BE.
AND LIKE A SONG THAT HAUNTS YOU,
BABY, YOU TAKE ME.
YOU TAKE RUTH--
AND THE TRUTH
WHERE YOU GO.

CHOPIN exits. In the other room, MARY cradles YOUNG RABBI in her arms. The music swells as the TWO WOMEN sing:

RUTH (cont'd)

SO IT ENDS...

MARY

SO IT STARTS...

MARY AND RUTH

NO JOURNEY CAN ERASE
THAT PLACE IN BOTH OUR HEARTS.
WHERE YOU GO,
I WILL GO.
WHERE YOU LIE,
SO WILL I.
AND I'LL STAY
TIL THE DAY THAT WE DIE...
TIL THE DAY WE DIE.

At the crest of the applause, lights fade on THEM. MARY and YOUNG RABBI exit. Then a pool of light reveals CHOPIN. Another comes up on RUTH who dons her coat and reaches for her suitcase.

SEGUE: SCENE 5

SCENE 5: A MOVIE SET, COLOGNE

CHOPIN
HOW HAVE I FOUND YOU?
HOW IN THE WORLD?
NOW THAT I'VE FOUND YOU
YOU ARE MY WORLD.
IN THESE TIMES THAT KEEP US GUESSING,
YOU'RE MY ANSWER AND MY BLESSING--

RUTH exits through the house. Lights up on a swank Art Deco movie set.

CHOPIN (cont'd)
IN THIS WORLD
THAT'S LOST ALL IT'S REASON,
AT LAST THERE'S A REASON
FOR HOPE IN MY HEART.
IN THIS WORLD,
UNSURE OF ITS FUTURE,
SO SURE OF YOU,
I SAY, 'LET THE FUTURE START.'

CHOPIN AND THE
GROUP
IN THIS WORLD
THAT'S WAITING FOR SOMEONE
TO ANSWER THE CALL
FROM OUT OF THE BLUE--
IN THIS WORLD
I PRAYED THERE WOULD COME ONE
MAGNIFICENT SOMEONE...
SOMEONE LIKE YOU.
SOMEONE LIKE YOU.
SOMEONE LIKE YOU.

WOMEN, in elegant Ginger Rogers-like gowns, dance on.

THE GROUP AND
FILM CAST
IN THIS WORLD
THAT'S LOST ALL ITS REASON
AT LAST THERE'S A REASON
FOR HOPE IN OUR HEARTS.
IN THIS WORLD
UNSURE OF ITS FUTURE,
SOMEHOW WITH YOU
I'M SURE WHERE THE FUTURE STARTS.

CHOPIN
IN THIS WORLD
OF DEEPENING MADNESS,
HOW EASILY HOPE
SURRENDERS TO FEAR--
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHOPIN (cont'd)

(HE stops and steps off the pedestal:)

Stop, please. Harry, I can't do this solo...with Ruthie and everything...I just can't do it.

BOBBY

Whaddaya mean? You have to!

LESH

No he doesn't. (To CHOPIN:) Of course. We understand. Harry knows the solo.

HARRY

No. Not me.

LESH

OK. Rabbi, then.

YOUNG RABBI takes his place on the pedestal. We hear the voice of SANDOR FRANKENHAUSER the film's director, from the back of the house. **He is RABBI.**

FRANKENHAUSER

Cut. Cut! Is there a problem?

HARRY

Mr. Frankenhauser, we'll be putting in a new soloist.

FRANKENHAUSER

That's a good idea. But I have a better idea--why don't we shut down production!

BOBBY

I knew it.

ERICH

Mr. Frankenhauser...Uncle Sandor, it's a personal matter. The new soloist knows the part and is ready to stand in.

LESH

Uncle Sandor?

ERICH

How do you think we got them to pay in cash.

FRANKENHAUSER

Your Uncle Sandy never could say 'no' to his little Erich. But that's exactly what I'll do if you're not ready to shoot this number in five minutes! Reset please.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHOPIN

I'm sorry, guys. I just couldn't...

OBERSTURMFUHRER enters with an ADJUTANT, the rank of STURMANN.

OBERSTURMFUHRER

Attention!

ALL freeze as music rumbles. RABBI is clearly distressed and wants to block out the scene. But the scene animates once again. RABBI steps on the pedestal as HE and his younger self switch places.

RABBI

IN THIS WORLD
THAT'S LOST ALL IT'S REASON,
AT LAST THERE'S A REASON
FOR HOPE IN MY HEART.

OBERSTURMFUHRER

(to STURMANN:)

The list.

RABBI

IN THIS WORLD,
UNSURE OF ITS FUTURE,
SO SURE OF YOU,
I SAY, 'LET THE FUTURE START.

STURMANN

Aaronson, Beryl. Baumgarten,
Isaac. Cohen, David. Cohen,
Sadie...

OBERSTURMFUHRER

The Third Reich no longer grants Jews the
privileges of German citizenship.

RABBI

IN THIS WORLD
OF DEEPENING MADNESS,
HOW EASILY HOPE
SURRENDERS TO FEAR.

STURMANN

Gorman, Meyer. Kurzer,
Judith. Levine, Celia.
Levine, Ivan. Mendelssohn,
Aaron...

OBERSTURMFUHRER

Jews may not be employed in the fields of
science and technology, education, pub-
lishing, radio, or film. If your name is
on this list, gather your belongings,
leave these premises, and if you seek
employment, seek it among your own kind!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RABBI IN THIS WORLD I PRAYED THERE WOULD COME ONE MAGNIFICENT SOMEONE...	STURMANN Stein, Sylvia. Tannenbaum, Louis. Wolff, Nathaniel. Yanow, Rose. Zimbler, Milton.
---	---

OBERSTURMFUHRER
Post it on the door.

BOBBY
I am Robert Biberti. The men in this
group have been assured by no less than
Standartenfuhrer...

OBERSTURMFUHRER
Yes. Yes. You have friends in high
places. Nevertheless...(pushing HIM
aside.) I am a loyal servant of the
Reich. It is not mine to question, to
disagree...

HARRY
To think.

OBERSTURMFUHRER
(after a tense beat:)
It is only my duty to inform you... that
The Comedian Harmonists have received a
special exemption from the law by order
of the Reichsminister of Culture. (Beat.)
Oh, yes... which one of you is Bootz?

CHOPIN
(hesitantly)
Me.

OBERSTURMFUHRER
Herr Bootz. Where's your wife?

CHOPIN
What?

OBERSTURMFUHRER
Simple enough question. Where's your Jew
wife?

CHOPIN
I don't know.

OBERSTURMFUHRER
Herr Bootz. Your wife has been arrested
attempting to cross the Belgian border.

CHOPIN
Oh my God.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OBERSTURMFUHRER
Which God is that, Herr Bootz?

CHOPIN
Ruthie...Oh God...Ruthie...

BOBBY
No! This is outrageous! What kind of
country does this to...

OBERSTURMFUHRER
Herr Biberti. Please. No dramatics. All
you need to know is that you and your
three Jews have received a special
exemption from the law.

HE crosses to exit.

BOBBY
Three Jews? No. There's a mistake. Not
three. Two.

OBERSTURMFUHRER
No mistake.

HE exits. BOBBY turns back to the GROUP, dumbstruck. A pause.

ERICH
Me. It's me. Erich...Abraham...Collin.
(in Hebrew, to YOUNG RABBI:)
Ani echad mi'shelachem.

LESH
What does that mean?

YOUNG RABBI
I am one of you.

ALL but RABBI freeze. The lights shift.

RABBI
I remember thinking it was the most
beautiful Hebrew I had ever heard. Ani
echad mi'shelachem. I am one of you.

ALL but RABBI exit.

SCENE 6: THE NIGHT TRAIN TO MUNICH

RABBI

And then I remember silence. A hush fell over us. After that day on the set in Cologne, I don't remember much at all. A blur. Sorry. Please. No more.

A train sound is heard. It rapidly crescendos. RABBI is acutely distressed by it.

Lights bang up on a train car. It is night. Three YOUNG WOMEN giggle in their seats. THE GROUP and MARY enter. As they take their seats:

YOUNG WOMAN #1

I can't stand it! They are all so cute

YOUNG WOMAN #2

But Chopin is the cutest.

YOUNG WOMAN #3

Oh, I think Lesh is the cutest.

YOUNG WOMAN #2

Forget it. In all the magazines he's always with redheads.

YOUNG WOMAN #1

(fluffing up her red hair)

Oh? Well, maybe Lesh is the cutest!

LESH spots YOUNG WOMAN #1, the redhead.

LESH

Wow. Look at her.

MARY

Lesh, was your mother a redhead?

LESH

Yes! How did you know?!

YOUNG WOMAN #1

Wish me luck!

(crossing to LESH:)

Excuse me.

LESH

Ari Leshnikoff, Comedian Harmonist.

YOUNG WOMAN #1

Yes, I know! Forgive me for interrupting, but could you autograph my train ticket?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LESH

Of course.

YOUNG WOMAN #1

We have all of your recordings. And we've seen all twelve of your motion pictures!

LESH

All twelve of them!

YOUNG WOMAN #1

Several times each! And we hear the new one will be absolutely wonderful!

LESH

I'm afraid not. Production was stopped.

YOUNG WOMAN #1

Oh. (As if she's commiserating:) Because of the Jews.

LESH

No. Because of the Germans.

A piercing train whistle is heard. YOUNG WOMAN #1 exits the car. RABBI and YOUNG RABBI begin to chant. Once again, RABBI sings all of his lines:

BOBBY

So I see only one option left.

RABBI

WE SPLIT UP.

YOUNG RABBI

We split up.

BOBBY

Yes. With the movie deal falling through, we don't have enough to buy seven sets of documents. So, if Chopin, Lesh and I stay behind, and if Harry, Erich, Rabbi and Mary go--

RABBI

VIENNA!

BOBBY

--say to Vienna, or anywhere safe, well then maybe we could each find three new members. And those of us who stay can protect the assets.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RABBI
OTHERWISE WE LOSE EVERYTHING.

BOBBY
Otherwise we lose everything.

ERICH
The money, you mean.

BOBBY
Yes. We can't get the money out, so those
of us who stay can protect it. Also the
contracts...the audience.

CHOPIN
I can't leave. I've gotta find Ruth.

MARY
Of course. Yes.

RABBI
FIND HER!

HARRY
Find her. Please.

RABBI
CHOPIN AND I ARE STAYING.

BOBBY
Well, it looks like Chopin and I are
staying. Lesh?

LESH
Bobby, is the money the most important
thing right now? I don't want to stay
behind because of the money. I want us
all to go with them...because I can't
imagine it any other way...

BOBBY
Lesh, I don't think that's the wisest
decision. I don't think you realize...

HARRY
Lesh asked you a question. Is the money
the most important thing?

BOBBY
I'm a practical man, Harry. Surely you
know this by now.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HARRY

Bobby! Have the past eight years meant anything to you?! If Erich, Rabbi, Mary and I leave, is it anything but a goddamned business set-back for you?!

RABBI

EASY, HARRY.

YOUNG RABBI

Easy, Harry.

HARRY

No! And you stand there--money, money, contracts--Bobby, you're the biggest pain in the ass I've ever known. And I love you. And the thought of maybe never seeing you again is breaking my fucking heart...

BOBBY

(breaking down)
I'm sorry. So sorry.

RABBI

HAD WE STAYED IN NEW YORK!

BOBBY

Had we stayed in New York...

MARY

(handing HIM a hankie)
Here. You fellas.

BOBBY

You knew, didn't you. Why didn't I?

RABBI

WE ALL MADE A MISTAKE THEN.

MARY

We all made a mistake then.

HARRY

Meanwhile, you're right.

RABBI

WE CAN'T ALL LEAVE.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HARRY

We can't all leave. (to LESH:) Lesh, if you come with us, it will be harder for Bobby to put together another group here. And if this thing does blow over, then, we can pick up again. I'd like that. Wouldn't you? (To BOBBY:) See? We have had a bad effect on each other!

HARRY reaches out to BOBBY. They grasp hands tightly. MARY grabs the hankie back from BOBBY.

MARY

You fellas!

CHOPIN

Harry? When did you fall in love with Ruth?

LESH

Chopin! That's crazy!

HARRY

I don't know. Maybe the first time I saw her speak at a rally. I'm sorry. Nothing ever happened.

RABBI

HONEST TO GOD.

HARRY

Honest to God.

CHOPIN

I know. She shoulda married you, Harry.

MARY

She did love you. I hope you know that.

BOBBY

Christ. Is there anything we don't know about each other at this point?

With that, all eyes turn to ERICH.

ERICH

No more secrets! Promise! No secret hides among true friends.

LESH

Who said that?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERICH
(after giving it a moment's
thought:)
Me! How about that! Me!

The YOUNG WOMEN sing "HARMONY."

WOMEN #2 & #3
HARMONY
DA-DA-DA HARMONY,
THEN JUST MAYBE WE'VE GOT A CHANCE...

RABBI MARY
THEY'RE SINGING YOUR SONG Rabbi, they're singing your song.
HE'S ON THE TRAIN!

WOMAN #1 Rushes on:

YOUNG WOMAN #1
He's on the train! The Fuhrer! I can't
believe it!

YOUNG WOMAN #2
The Fuhrer?!

YOUNG WOMAN #1
He's actually here! And he's coming this
way!

MARY
This isn't happening.

YOUNG RABBI
I'm afraid it is.

YOUNG RABBI rises from his seat and steps into the aisle.

MARY
Rabbi! What are you doing?! Sit down! For
the love of God, Joe, sit down!

The THREE WOMEN rise and salute.

ERICH
SH'MA YISRAEL...
(ALL but YOUNG RABBI:)
ADONAI ELOHENUH....
ADONAI ECHAD.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RABBI takes in the scene and crosses center. ALL but RABBI freeze. To YOUNG RABBI:

RABBI
YOU CAN DO IT, YOU CAN DO IT.
THIS IS YOUR CHANCE!
THEY HAVE THE GUNS, YOU GRAB A GUN,
YOU SHOOT THE GUN...
THIS IS YOUR TIME!
DO IT! DO IT! NOTHING TO IT!
KILL HIM! AND IT'S OVER!
SO THEY KILL YOU, SO WHAT?
DOESN'T MATTER, DOES IT?
NO. YES! NO!
YOU CAN DO IT, IF YOU DO IT...
IT WILL CHANGE THE WORLD--
YOU CHANGE EVERYTHING!
BUT NO!!... NOTHING!, NOTHING!!
YOU DID NOTHING!
AND YOUR PUNISHMENT IS
TO REMEMBER EVERYTHING!!
YOU ALONE WILL REMEMBER EVERYTHING.
YOU'LL REMEMBER HARMONY.
YOU'LL REMEMBER
EVERY SINGLE DAY
YOU'LL REMEMBER
EVERY EMPTY NIGHT
YOU'LL REMEMBER
THE CHANCE THAT WAS YOURS
TO OBLITERATE HIS.
AND THE TRUTH OF IT ALL
WHEN THE TRUTH OF IT IS
YOU DID NOTHING!
LIKE THE THOUSANDS WHO FOLLOWED, NOTHING!
LIKE THE MILLIONS WHO STOOD BY
AND WATCHED AND DENIED.
BUT WORST OF ALL, JUST LIKE THEM ALL...
YOU STEPPED ASIDE--

YOUNG RABBI steps aside. Screen images indicate that the ENTOURAGE passes and exits the train car. The scene on the train goes dark. RABBI is alone on stage.

RABBI (cont'd)
SH'MA YISRAEL ADONAI ELOHENUH
ADONAI ECHAD...
WHAT WERE YOU THINKING?
DIDN'T YOU KNOW?
MARY KNEW! DIDN'T YOU?!
YES! NO! YES!
WHY---WAS I CHOSEN?
TO REMEMBER? TO RELIVE?
TO FORGET? TO FORGIVE?
NO! YES! NO!!

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RABBI (cont'd)

SH'MA YISRAEL ADONAI...ADONAI!

(to 'God:')

NOTHING! YOU DID NOTHING!

ADONAI!!

EVERY SINGLE DAY

YOU'LL REMEMBER!

EVERY ENDLESS NIGHT

YOU'LL REMEMBER!

'TIL THE DAY YOU DIE!

YOU DID NOTHING! NOTHING! NOTHING!

YOU COULD HAVE KILLED HIM!

HE KILLED MAMA! HE KILLED PAPA!

YOU COULD HAVE STOPPED HIM...THE EVIL.

YOU COULD HAVE STOPPED THE LUNACY.

YOU COULD HAVE STOPPED THE TRAINS!

WHY?! WHY?! ADONAI!

TIL THE DAY YOU DIE-- WHY!

SEGUE: SCENE 7

SCENE 7: THE NATIONAL THEATER, MUNICH

A red curtain falls behind RABBI. The National Theater in Munich. BOBBY, HARRY, ERICH, LESH and YOUNG RABBI enter. THEY do not acknowledge RABBI.

BOBBY

Remember, if there's any heckling, we just walk off.

LESH

And what if Chopin doesn't make it?

HARRY

We'll do the whole damn show without him. I hope he doesn't make it. That means they let him see her.

BOBBY

How's everything else coming? The papers?

YOUNG RABBI

We've got everything but the cash. Mary's ripped apart every coat we own. Now we need the money to stuff into them.

ERICH

Fellas, I'd ask my parents. But they're in the same bind.

LESH

What are they gonna do?

ERICH

They're staying. They feel they have too much to lose. And they think it will blow over.

RABBI slowly rises and crosses to stage right and HE sits.

HARRY

Well, a couple more shows should do it.

BOBBY

They turned Ezra Kaplan back at the border, even though they couldn't find anything on him. Just because he had made a big withdrawal from the bank.

ERICH

Oy. The border. I don't even want to think about that.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

YOUNG RABBI

Oy?! Harry! There's hope for him yet!

CHOPIN rushes on. HE shakes his head.

CHOPIN

They wouldn't let me see her. They wouldn't even let me past the damn gate. Bastards!

THE SIX gather around. STANDARTENFUHRER enters.

BOBBY

Standartenfuhrer. You are a fan.

STANDARTENFUHRER

I'm here on official business.

BOBBY

Oh. Official business? Are we suspected of being abortionists or homosexuals?

STANDARTENFUHRER

As you probably realized, I did indeed put in a good word for you with my colleagues in cultural affairs. Now I have been asked to deliver this letter. I suspect my loyalties are being tested.

HE tries to hand the letter to BOBBY, ERICH intercedes.

ERICH

I'm still the secretary. Though I suspect not for long. (HE reads:) From the Office of the Reichsminister of Culture: The Comedian Harmonists are hereby forbidden to perform with their current personnel. Their last performance will be on 5th November, 1935 in Munich...

HARRY

Tonight?!

ERICH

No further exemption from the law will be in effect. The group may reorganize but not with the current Jewish members, nor with the current name. The group may not perform songs composed by Jews, with lyrics by Jews, arrangements by Jews or published by Jews. Failure to obey this order will result in the immediate arrest and imprisonment of all personnel.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STANDARTENFUHRER

The remaining supply of your recordings will be confiscated. It will be a crime against the Reich to sell them or play them. Your films will be destroyed. We are aware of your satiric escapades in foreign countries. We choose to believe it was due to the corrosive Jewish influence in your group. That we have corrected. But be warned. Gentlemen.

HE clicks his heels, turns, and exits. A pause.

BOBBY

How fast can you go?

ERICH

Tonight, if we must.

BOBBY

Chopin, Lesh, I say we give them the take from tonight. All of it. And anything else we have that's not in the bank. It's nowhere near enough, but...

CHOPIN

Absolutely.

LESH

Of course. Oh God.

A STAGE MANAGER rushes on.

STAGE MANAGER

You're on. There's gonna be an announcement first.

ALL take their "places" on stage. We see THEIR backs to us, the "audience" being upstage. We hear STANDARTENFUHRER'S voice.

STANDARTENFUHRER

Tonight will be the last performance of The Comedian Harmonists! The Reichsminister of Culture has deemed their music... degenerate. Heil Hitler!

The GROUP turns to face us, RABBI stirs. As HE speaks, the GROUP acts out what HE says:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RABBI

Yes. I remember. I remember the lights hitting us. They seemed brighter than usual. Hotter. I remember Chopin raising the pitch pipe to his lips. Then, blowing ...softly. Only we could hear. I remember Harry about to nod, to give us the down-beat to begin. And then, something strange. Yes. Right then--we all at once knew, together-- that we would never see each other again.

HE looks at them helplessly, as THEY look at each other, equally helplessly. Their arms and hands want to reach out. They want to memorize each other's faces. Then, RABBI rises from his chair and crosses to them. THE SIX freeze.

RABBI (cont'd)

And we didn't see each other again. Ever. We got out, Harry, Erich, Mary and me. The border was...

(gesturing "you can't imagine")

We went to Vienna. We thought we would be safe. We were not. We kept running. Back home...home, back in Germany, Bobby, Chopin, and Lesh were arrested and imprisoned at Gestapo headquarters on Prinz-Albrecht-Strasse. The most feared address in Berlin. There they were--interrogated, is what the officials called it. For weeks. My God, they were singers! What did they think... Lesh was released, but deported to Bulgaria. Bobby and Chopin were eventually released, but their names went on a list. And when the War came, they were first to be sent to the front. The War. Yes. And then...the unspeakable.

(HIS hands fly up, "I won't talk about that.")

We never found Ruth. But, in a way, she found us. Somehow she got a note out... a rag with charcoal scribblings on it, delivered to Chopin by the underground. She wrote, "Surely this is the end of the world. Surely God is dead. But the stars, ...how can they be shining now?" That's the last we know of her.

(A beat.)

The rest of us, we all survived. Don't ask me how, or why. We just survived. But there are many ways to die. And it had taken its toll. Soon after, Erich died. Erich. With his quotations for every occasion. What would he have said about this?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERICH

Music...when soft voices die...vibrates
in the memory.

(Beat, then a coy smile)

Keats.

RABBI

("Ah, yes." Then:)

No. Shelley.

ERICH

Very good, Rabbi! Very good!

HIS light goes out.

RABBI

Harry, God bless him, went back to
Germany. He had some unfinished business.

("Get this:")

He became a translator at the Nuremberg
trials! (Beat.) But he kept a packed
suitcase under his bed. Just in case. It
was there the day he died.

(HE turns to HARRY:)

It should have been you, my friend. This
was your story. It should have been you
telling it.

HARRY

You did fine. I am so proud of you.

HIS light goes out.

RABBI

And then...my dear, dear Lesh.

LESH

(Animated:)

We saved them, Rabbi! Every Jewish person
in Bulgaria! We wouldn't let them have
them! Not one! Tell'em, will ya? We
saved them all!

LESH'S light goes out.

RABBI

Bobby, Chopin and I lived on. And on. But
we were separated by six thousand miles
and an iron curtain. Then, a few years
ago, I received a letter from Chopin's
landlady.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHOPIN

Your comrade, Erwin Bootz, died last night. He asked that you be contacted. He asked if you could continue to look for her. And...he asked if you could forgive him.

CHOPIN'S light fades.

RABBI

I didn't want to be the last one. I was counting on you, Bobby.

BOBBY

I think it turned out right.

RABBI reaches into his pocket and pulls out a telegram.

RABBI

Bobby died today.
(BOBBY'S light fades.)
I am the only one left.
(Beat.)
I am eighty-seven years old.

YOUNG RABBI who stands in the only remaining pool of light.

RABBI (cont'd)

And what am I going to do about you?

YOUNG RABBI

Well...how about...this--

HE stretches out his arms and offers a hug. RABBI embraces HIM. There is a moment between them. As THEY separate:

RABBI

It was so good to see them one last time.

YOUNG RABBI

You will see them again.

RABBI

(nodding, "that's true," but then abruptly:)
No rush!

YOUNG RABBI laughs. His light dims, but it does not go completely out. We hear a scratchy recording. The shaft of light appears once more at the stage right proscenium, but this time it reveals an upholstered chair, and a table on which there is a cassette tape recorder, microphone, and a phonograph with a record spinning. RABBI sits.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RABBI (cont'd)

I am the only one left.
Mary and I...Mary--thank God for her--
We live in America. California.

(Proudly:)

I still sing at the temple! No one here
knows about us. That's alright. I
remember.

(Beat. Then, owning it:)

I remember. And I was wrong. It is not my
punishment-- it is my blessing. That's
all. (Realizing he's done:) That's all.

HE reaches for the tape recorder as if to turn it off, but
pauses. HE looks into the wings to make sure he's private.

RABBI (cont'd)

And it would be nice... if someone
knew...we were there. Three Jews. Three
Gentiles. And amidst all the horror...and
despite our squabbles...we found--
harmony. And oh, what I wouldn't give for
one more moment of that.

It is done. RABBI gingerly places the needle back on the
record. A shimmering, icy chord is heard. Then another. With
each sound, a pool of light reveals one of the six members of
the GROUP. Then a very few star-like lights dimly appear
upstage. THEY sing:

LESH

LOOK! LOOK AT THE STARS,
HOW BRILLIANT THEY ARE.

CHOPIN

HOW CAN THEY BE SHINING NOW,
WHEN HOPE SEEMS SO FAR?

BOBBY

LOOK! LOOK HOW THEY SHINE,
THESE CRUELEST OF STARS.

HARRY

WHAT PROMISE INSPIRES THEM?

ERICH

WHAT FAITH IS IT FIRES THEM?

YOUNG RABBI

DARKNESS GROWS.
THE WORLD TURNS COLD.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

YOUNG RABBI AND
BOBBY
AND STILL THERE GLOWS THE LIGHT...

THE GROUP
HEAVEN KNOWS
WHAT HOPE THEY HOLD TONIGHT.
LOOK! LOOK HOW THEY TEASE,
THESE STARS IN THE NIGHT.
THE DARKER THE NIGHT BECOMES,
THE BRIGHTER THEIR LIGHT BECOMES...
CHILL WINDS WAIL.
THE TEMPEST BREWS.
AND CLOUDS ASSAIL THE SKY.
THROUGH THE VEIL,
THE STARS REFUSE TO DIE!

HARRY, ERICH and YOUNG RABBI take a unison step aside, leaving a space between THEM and the OTHER THREE. Then, all SIX turn to RABBI, and with a sweep of the arm, gesture for HIM to fill the space. HE rises from his chair, slowly crosses to THE GROUP, and takes his place among THEM.

THE GROUP AND
RABBI
(as THEY cross downstage:)
IN THIS WORLD
OF DARKEST NIGHT,
WHERE HOPE IS HURLED AWAY,
THERE THEY ARE,
AND STILL THERE'S LIGHT.
OH SO FAR,
BUT WILL THEY...DARE THEY...
LIFT OUR HEARTS
AS WE LIFT OUR EYES?
ARE WE FOOLS TO SEE
THE HOPE THAT'S GLEAMING
IN THE SKIES?
(urgently!:)
Look! THERE'S THE LIGHT!
STARS IN THE NIGHT!

As ALL but RABBI recede upstage into the firmament, a shooting star traces an arc across the sky bursting into a shower of stardust. RABBI turns and sees THEM as we do, as if THEY were a fully realized constellation in the night sky. HE then turns to US, as:

ALL BUT RABBI
(as a calliope)
OOM-PAH-PAH, OOM-PAH-PAH
OOM-PAH, OOM-PAH, OOM-PAH!

A smile illuminates RABBI's face. And then, HE laughs. Mission completed, THE GROUP smiles broadly, as:

THE CURTAIN FALLS

FINALE ULTIMO

The ENTIRE COMPANY sings:

COMPANY
DARE THEY...
LIFT OUR HEARTS
AS WE LIFT OUR EYES?
ARE WE FOOLS TO SEE
THE HARMONY THAT FILLS THE SKIES?
Look!
THERE'S THE LIGHT!
STARS IN THE NIGHT!
REMEMBER THE STARS
IN THE NIGHT!

After the final bow, projected is the following photo of THE COMEDIAN HARMONISTS--ARI LESHNIKOFF, ERICH COLLIN, ERWIN BOOTZ, ROBERT BIBERTI, HARRY FROMMERMAN, and "RABBI" JOSEF ROMAN CYKOWSKI. The final bow is theirs.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A PROGRAM NOTE ABOUT THE COMEDIAN HARMONISTS:

The Comedian Harmonists were indeed the toast of Europe from the late 1920's through the early War years. The events of their career are dramatized here largely as they occurred. Some license has been taken with regard to chronology and locale. The characters of historical merit--politicians, performers, men of science and letters-- all indeed factored in the story. The uncanny meeting on the train, dramatized in our second act, happened.