

FINALE

Controlled by an overbearing Father, who is also her conductor, a meek clarinet player finally channels the passion her Father has so strongly pushed for when she gets involved with a rebellious musician he does not approve of.

FADE IN:

EXT. NEW YORK CITY OPERA - MANHATTAN - DAY

City noise drowns out the sound of a beautiful water fountain in front of this old, historic Opera House.

A poster hangs in a tall glass marquis advertising the upcoming performance of "Verdi's Rigoletto".

INT. NEW YORK CITY OPERA - DAY

A full orchestra rehearsal echoes through this beautifully ornate venue. House lights on, red velvet seats empty.

The music is abruptly interrupted by the loud tap of a conductor's baton.

INT. ORCHESTRA PIT - CONTINUOUS

Maestro SALVATORE LUISI (55), a thick man with bushy eyebrows over piercing dark eyes and a permanent scowl, repeatedly hits his baton on his music stand.

In front of all the musicians he angrily points his baton toward CLIVE (45), a conservative looking clarinet player.

MAESTRO

(thick Italian accent)

You! You have no passione!

Next to Clive sits another clarinetist, FIONA LUISI (25), strikingly beautiful despite no makeup, unflattering clothes and hair in a ponytail.

As the Maestro yells she closes her eyes to shut him out.

FLASHBACK

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY - FIFTEEN YEARS EARLIER

Seated on a chair, lips pursed to her clarinet, Fiona (10) accompanies her father the Maestro as he plays the piano.

She gazes out the window at several GIRLS (10) as they playfully skip down the road, arm in arm. She watches them intently and suddenly realizes the piano has stopped.

As she looks up, her Father's hand strikes her cheek.

MAESTRO
You waste my time! Stupid girl!

BACK TO PRESENT

She looks over to Clive as he carefully dismantles his clarinet and places the pieces in the box.

Everyone sits silent as Maestro speaks on the phone.

MAESTRO (CONT'D)
See if Marcel is available.

As he quietly leaves, Clive's fellow musicians offer him sympathetic nods.

MAESTRO (CONT'D)
Well you must find someone! We
have less than a week!

Maestro slams down the phone. He approaches the stand, lifts his baton and rehearsal continues as if nothing has happened.

INT. TAXI - NIGHT

A CABBIE pulls away from the Opera House, Maestro and Fiona in the backseat.

Fiona looks out the window, watches several of her fellow musicians talk and laugh as they walk together.

MAESTRO
I want you to practice the third movement after we've had dinner. I could have just as easily gotten rid of you today. I feel nothing when you play, except maybe nausea.

She continues to look out the window.

FIONA
Yes Father.

INT. ORCHESTRA PIT - MORNING

The chaotic sound of musicians warming up. Maestro stares angrily at the empty seat next to Fiona.

She looks up, makes eye contact with her Father and quickly looks away.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY OPERA - SAME TIME

The roar of a motorcycle approaches. People quickly disperse as it jumps the curb. It's driver purposely rides it to the side of the Opera House and parks, illegally.

INT. ORCHESTRA PIT - MOMENTS LATER

With a tap of Maestro's baton, rehearsal begins only to be immediately interrupted by a loud slam of the metal door.

At the door stands DEAN HARRIS(30), helmet in one hand clarinet case in the other. His carefree manner annoys the Maestro, his good looks capture Fiona's attention.

Maestro points to the empty seat next Fiona. She fidgets nervously, trying not to stare as he approaches.

MAESTRO

I've been assured you are a very capable musician.

As Dean sits, he and Fiona's eyes meet. He smiles, she blushes and shyly looks away. He quickly and professionally puts his clarinet together.

MAESTRO (CONT'D)

We are working on the third movement. Are you familiar?

DEAN

Yes Sir. Maestro.

Dean brings the clarinet to his lips, glances toward Fiona and smiles coyly. She can't help but smile back. She looks up at her Father who glares at them, her smile fades.

INT. TAXI - NIGHT

As the cab pulls away from the Opera House, Fiona watches in fascination as Dean rides away on his motorcycle. She ignores the Maestro who scowls at her in disapproval.

INT. NEW YORK CITY OPERA - MORNING

First to arrive, Maestro unlocks the side door, Fiona follows him in. As they get to the orchestra door Fiona stops.

FIONA

I have to go to the ladies room.

Maestro shrugs and enters the orchestra door.

INT. LADIES ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

In front of the mirror, Fiona removes her pony tail and brushes her hair. She applies some lip gloss then pinches her cheeks for color. Much better. She smiles.

INT. ORCHESTRA PIT - MOMENTS LATER

Several musicians are seated and warming up, Fiona sneaks in and sits. Her eyes dart toward the door every time it opens.

Finally Dean enters, her face immediately flushes red. As he sits she looks up, he smiles and extends his hand.

DEAN

I didn't have a chance to introduce myself yesterday. I'm Dean Harris.

She timidly shakes his hand, musters a smile.

FIONA

Fiona Luisi.

DEAN

Luisi?

He looks toward the front of the room and finds the Maestro glaring at him. Maestro angrily taps his baton to start.

INT. ORCHESTRA PIT - AFTERNOON

A break. Maestro consults with a group of violinists on the other side of the room.

Dean stands, stretches. Fiona tries not to look at him.

DEAN

You play beautifully Fiona.

She smiles and looks up with more confidence this time.

FIONA

That's kind of you to say.

DEAN

I can help you with the third movement. If you'd like me to.

Fiona nods. Dean moves his chair closer, she catches her breath. He points to a group of notes on the music sheet.

DEAN (CONT'D)

Here is where you're having a problem. The crescendo. Think of the story Fiona. Gilda's father Rigoletto has ordered that the man she loves be killed. In order to save him, she sacrifices herself.

Her eyes soften as she listens to Dean.

DEAN (CONT'D)

Her father kept her hidden away her whole life but she still found love. He couldn't control that.

He stares into her eyes, she bites her lip as he gently places his hand on her leg.

DEAN (CONT'D)

Do you think you can channel that kind of passion Fiona?

Breath momentarily escapes her. Her voice trembles.

FIONA

Yes Dean. I can do that.

TAP, TAP, TAP. Everyone snaps to attention and returns to their places. Dean quickly moves his chair back. Maestro cannot hide his anger, Fiona looks mortified.

MAESTRO

Finale!

Dean looks at Fiona, nods in encouragement.

Maestro taps, the music begins. At first Fiona is timid but something overcomes her.

When they reach the clarinet solo, she and Dean play in sync. It's passionate, it's perfection. She glares at her father then glances toward Dean, raises a frisky eyebrow and smiles.

INT. TAXI - NIGHT

With nostrils flared, Maestro looks out the window and watches Dean ride past on his motorcycle, Fiona seated behind him, her arms wrapped tightly around his waist.

FADE OUT.