

PIANISSIMO

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A BURNING STUDIO FILM
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INT. UNDERWATER - MIDNIGHT BLUE

TEACHERS, FAMILY, GUIDES, and hundreds more are all looking down from above the water. Their faces are BLURRED but their emotions are clear. They're not disappointed but they're watching. An AMBULANCE SIREN, BLASTS in the distance. They are unaffected and very so clearly watching...

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

A SMALL pair of hands grace a piano. They yearn not for anything else but to let NOISE RING, for the sound to ECHO into ETERNITY.

We widen, revealing LUCA, a talented 6-year-old PIANIST.

LUCA's hands move like WATER across the SEA of NOTES.

We widen further revealing JUNE, LUCA's mother, her eyes twinkling in amazement.

With one final note, LUCA finishes, he SMILES, and for the first time he's gotten this accompaniment all right, no mistakes.

LUCA
I know, I know, I could have done
better at the end my hands just
can't reach-

JUNE stops him, kneels down, and GRABS his SMALL HANDS.

JUNE
Look.

She spreads his hand palm to palm against hers.

A beat.

Their EYES LOCK.

JUNE (CONT'D)
There is nothing. NOTHING. You
can't do with these hands.
(moving his SMALL hands
around)

A beat.

JUNE (CONT'D)
Do you believe me?

LUCA nods. He's never been more sure of anything in his life.

JUNE (CONT'D)
You have to believe you can do
ANYTHING to do ANYTHING. Now say it
with me:

They both speak in UNISON, a routine that seemed to shape his
ENTIRE EXISTENCE, so powerful it seemed to REVERBERATE into
the PIANO ITSELF...

JUNE & LUCA
I'm a STAR... I'm a STAR... I'm a

SWIPE UP TO:

EXT. THEATER - DAY

A NEWS REPORTER WITH MICROPHONE IN HAND--

NEWS REPORTER
And TODAY marks the 23RD
ANNIVERSARY of the ASHBURN GALA.
The MOST PRESTIGIOUS-

SWIPE UP TO:

INT. CAR - SUNSET

We sit LOW in the BACK SEAT, a SMALL BOY buried under a too-
big KEYBOARD...the WATER GLISTENING as they go OVER a
BRIDGE...he overhears his PARENTS at the FRONT...

DAD
He needs to GROW UP. He can't keep
PLAYING his ENTIRE LIFE.

MOM
Well, he LIKES to PLAY, so he's
GOING TO PLAY.
(pauses)
He's not just good JAMES, he's
GREAT.

DAD
(sighs)
We don't know what ELSE he'd be
GREAT at if all he does is PIANO.

MOM
Oh, you want him to be an
ACCOUNTANT like you?
(accusatory)

DAD
Being GOOD at MATH is not a BAD
THING. I mean we take him out of
classes, extracurriculars...

MOM
This IS his extra-curricular.

DAD
He can't play his ENTIRE LIFE, you
know that.
(he GRABS the KEYBOARD)
Who's he going to be? If that's all
he thinks he is, is...is
(stares)
this BOARD?

MOM
(looks back at US)
He's going to be...

A CAR FROM THE ONCOMING LANE JERKS INTO THEIR LANE, RACING
DEAD AT THEM-

MOM (CONT'D)
...WHATEVER he wants to be.

SWIPE UP TO:

INT. STUDIO - DAY

A SMALL BOY sits on a stool in the middle of a room, his legs
dangling, feet above the ground. He's giddy. Happy. He's
himself.

He's being interviewed.

SMALL BOY
I just like playing. I've always
liked to play. I've always felt
like I could do anything with my
hands.

SWIPE UP TO:

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

A PRETTY, YOUNG GIRL, JESSICA, sits in her LARGE ROOM.

JESSICA
Why doesn't he sound the same? What
happened with him?
(holding up an ALBUM)

SWIPE UP TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

We're on a COUCH, watching a SMALL TV. An ARM is around US.

UNKNOWN (O.S)
If you PERFORM there...
(points)
I'd be the proudest Mom ev--

SWIPE UP TO:

INT. PODCAST STUDIO - DAY

A GROUP OF MEN, JOE, JAMES, AND JARRED, are in an INTENSE discussion.

JOE
Is every ARTIST supposed to play
until they CAN'T?

JAMES
Well, there comes a point in every
artist's life that they have to put
down the pen, so to speak.

JARRED
I don't buy it, he's GENERATIONAL.

JAMES doesn't disagree.

JAMES
And when was the last time he
released something generational?

SWIPE UP TO:

73 QUESTION WITH THE SAME SMALL BOY. HE'S IN A SMALL LIVING ROOM...

SMALL BOY
Hello! My name's LU-

SWIPE UP TO:

EXT. FARM - DAY

SOMEONES PISSING ON AN ALBUM.

SWIPE UP TO:

EXT. RED CARPET - DAY

A SMALL BOY is BLINDED BY THE LIGHT, the BRIGHT SUN is getting in his EYES...

INTERVIEWER
(microphone pointing)
LUCA, when you look at all you've done in such a short time, how are you going to look back on this?

LUCA
Well they say you're gonna miss these early times,
(tucks hair behind ear)
so I'm sure gonna try to remember what it feels like.

A beat.

You know I don't know if I'll ever get a moment like this again,
(laughs)
I'm really lucky. I'm just glad my Mom is here with me...

WE PULL BACK and REVEAL we've been inside of an iPhone of a YOUNG MAN.

He's WATCHING, like the WHOLE WORLD rests on it.

His FINGERS, WEAK, keep SWIPING...THEY TWITCH...

We PULL even FURTHER back...REVEALING...

INT. GRUNGY BEDROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Still SWIPING...the YOUNG MAN is surrounded by SEVERAL BAGS of FOOD, BEER BOTTLES, and ASSORTED CLOTHES...

We PULL even FURTHER revealing his ENTIRE ROOM is COVERED in STICKY NOTES, hundreds if not THOUSANDS litter the WALL of ideas he's GOING to do, lives he WANTS to live...

BANG. BANG. BANG.

UNKNOWN

OPEN UP!

(serious)

OPEN THE FUCK UP!

YOUNG MAN

COMING!

(curses under his breath)

He MOVES, more than he has in DAYS...

Throwing all the TRASH, BOTTLES, and MORE in his CLOSET. He RUNS to WASH his face and BRUSH his TEETH.

He SMILES in the mirror: they're ROTTING.

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)

(with toothbrush in mouth)

I'll be there in a second!

THE YOUNG MAN SPITS in FAUCET, it's RED, he RUNS...

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)

(opening the door)

AMARA!

AMARA

LUCA!

AMARA (CONT'D)

You look like SHIT.

A beat.

LUCA

(touches his eyebrows,
dandruff falls)

I love you too, SIS.

AMARA

I love you more.

A beat.

AMARA (CONT'D)
(serious)
Say it.

LUCA rolls his EYES.

LUCA
I love you more than the ENTIRE
WORLD.

AMARA is pleased.

AMARA
Take a shower.

He follows like a SOLDIER.

CUT TO:

INT. GRUNGY BEDROOM - NIGHT

LUCA'S SINGING VOICE echoes through the apartment as he
SHOWERS. He's actually not HALF BAD.

AMARA looks AROUND at his CLUSTERFUCK of a ROOM. She hasn't
seen her brother in YEARS. She presses her thumb on one of
the THOUSANDS of STICKY NOTES, her fingers FEEL the DIRT.

AMARA notices a DIRTY KNIFE on the FLOOR.

AMARA opens the closet & EVERYTHING falls OUT.

AMARA
(shocked)
Jesus Christ--

--BAM--

LUCA
--What are you doing here?

LUCA BARGES IN, TOWEL COVERING HIM.

AMARA holds up the KNIFE.

AMARA
Since when do you have KNIVES?

LUCA GRABS IT OUT OF HER HANDS.

LUCA
Get the FUCK out of my ROOM!--

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. GRUNGY LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

--AMARA sits on the SOFA, placing SPONGEBOB BAND-AIDS on the COFFEE TABLE. She looks at the WALL. AWARDS and PLAQUES line the wall, but not from the PRESENT, from the PAST...

...LUCA walks in. He cleans up WELL.

LUCA
So I was thinking, we can go eat--

AMARA
--Are you SMOKING?

LUCA
What?

AMARA
You heard me. I said are you
SMOKING?

LUCA
No. I'm not fucking SMOKING, are
you CRAZY. What's gotten into YOU?

AMARA
Then PEE in THIS.
(places CAPSULE)

LUCA SCOFFS.

AMARA (CONT'D)
I believe you. But please.
(softly)

AMARA tries to hand LUCA the capsule. LUCA's voice RISES.

LUCA
I'm not a kid anymore AMARA. I mean
I haven't seen you in, in years and
you're treating me like I'm some,
some, some JUNKIE ANIMAL?
(shaking)
I thought you LOVED ME?

A beat. They LOCK eyes.

AMARA
This has nothing to do with LOVE,
LUCA.

(to LUCA, directly,
WAVERING)

You promise, you're not SMOKING.
(HER EYES JUST WANT HER
LITTLE BROTHER BACK.)

LUCA
I SWEAR to YOU.
(POINTS at her CHEST)

A beat.

LUCA (CONT'D)
Look, I don't want to fight.
(sighs)

LUCA looks at HER as if they were KIDS AGAIN.

LUCA (CONT'D)
Food?

AMARA MISSES HIM.

AMARA
Food.
(smiling)

The CAPSULE stays on the table.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR - NIGHT

AMARA talks to LUCA, but LUCA is looking OUTWARD.

His hair FLAPS in the WIND, she watches him and SMILES.

CUT TO:

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

LUCA is eating a BURGER. AMARA is eating a SALAD.

AMARA is on her PHONE.

LUCA
You're on your PHONE too much, you
know.

AMARA
Yeah, well, some of us have
responsibilities so--

A beat.

AMARA (CONT'D)
Someone's hungry.

LUCA
I guess you're not so much anymore
now that you're on Ozempic.

AMARA
I'm not on--

LUCA looks at her.

AMARA (CONT'D)
Ok...maybe I am. Can you tell?
(nervous)

LUCA
You always look perfect to me.

AMARA
Shut up.

That's her BROTHER. Her SWEET BROTHER.

LUCA
So, I heard, YOU, got a new place?
(pointing with a fry)

AMARA
I did, I did. I can't wait for you
to see it.
(proudly)

A beat.

AMARA (CONT'D)
So how's your place--

LUCA
You know I haven't been able to
FUCKING PAY RENT so why are you
asking me?

The room chills. It's like he's flipped. Someone ELSE.

AMARA
I'm sorry, I was just--

LUCA
You were just what?

A beat.

LUCA (CONT'D)
At least, I didn't give up on my
dreams, okay.
(dipping fry in KETCHUP)

AMARA is PISSED.

AMARA
Oh, what. I gave up on my dreams.
(scoffs)
Is this what your DREAMS are?
Because if living like THAT are
your DREAMS then you need to WAKE
UP! You know WHAT!
(crosses her ARMS)

A beat.

AMARA (CONT'D)
You're just like DAD.

LUCA
Fuck you. I don't even remember
them, that's not FAIR.

A beat.

AMARA
That no one can be SMARTER, or know
it ALL, or do anything GREAT,
because,
(AIR QUOTES)
"I'm LUCA STARR--

A WHITE GIRL, BLACK GIRL, and ASIAN GIRL walk up:

LUCA puts his two hands up and looks at AMARA.

GROUP OF GIRLS
We're, just, such big FANS!

LUCA
Hey! Do you know my sister?

WHITE GIRL
Of course, aren't you moving into a
new place?

AMARA

What the-

LUCA

Yes. She is, if you all don't mind
we haven't seen each other in a
long time-

BLACK GIRL

Oh, YOU think you're too big time?
FUCK YOU.

The group of girls are PISSED.

LUCA

Ok, no, I feel like that's very
reasonable--

ASIAN GIRL

--Yeah, no wonder everyone's
talking SHIT about you.

LUCA

Ok, well, that's NOT-

The ASIAN GIRL SPITS on LUCA. Like a SPIDERWEB OVER HIS FACE.

AMARA is in DISBELIEF. SHOCKED. Hands CUPPING her MOUTH.

The GROUP of GIRLS walk away.

LUCA wipes his FACE.

AMARA

I'm sorry.

LUCA

Don't be. Price of my DREAMS.

AMARA winces.

AMARA

That's not what I meant.

A beat.

AMARA (CONT'D)

I'm sorry about **TONIGHT**.

LUCA's eye TWITCHES.

LUCA

Why are you here AMARA?

AMARA

You know.

(pauses)

I love you. But you're done--

LUCA waves her OFF--

LUCA

I'm the BEST, GODDAMN PIANO PLAYER
IN THE WORLD, AMARA!

He's MANIC.

LUCA (CONT'D)

I mean, how could you say that to
me?

(softly)

A beat.

AMARA

You WERE.

(can barely say it)

You WERE. And I can't watch you
destroy your LIFE.

LUCA's head is in his HANDS. His hands TWITCH. His hands are
a ROADMAP of RUINED NEVES, pink surgical SCARS laddering
across each finger and wrist, the skin SHINY and TIGHT where
they've been OPENED and SEWN SHUT.

LUCA

I was GOOD.

She puts his hands on his ARM.

LUCA (CONT'D)

And...I can't even touch the keys
without it hurting...

He shakes her OFF.

AMARA

I think you should start looking to
do something else, maybe APPLYING
to some jobs...You had a good run,
you did.

He's in DISBELIEF.

LUCA

You said-

AMARA

I know what I said. But here's what I'm saying now: not everyone has gotten to experience what you've experienced.

(sincerely)

You have to know when the ride is over - And it's over. Isn't that ENOUGH?

LUCA

How can you SAY THAT?

AMARA

LUCA--

LUCA

It's about MONEY isn't it?

(pauses)

If I had enough MONEY we wouldn't be having this conversation.

(scoffs)

AMARA

It's NOT about MONEY, this is about YOU.

LUCA

I thought YOU, BELIEVED in me.

He sniffles.

LUCA (CONT'D)

Tell me what else I can do?

(serious)

I mean NAME IT, what else could I do with my life?

He crosses his arms and then puts his POINTER FINGER on the TABLE.

LUCA (CONT'D)

You know this is IT.

(dead serious)

I will never be as good at ANYTHING ELSE compared to THIS.

(painfully)

LUCA (CONT'D)

You know it.

He scoffs.

LUCA (CONT'D)
The WORLD knows IT--

AMARA stops HIM.

AMARA
You know I am here for you no
matter WHAT. Anything you'd do, it
doesn't MATTER--

He SLAMS the TABLE.

LUCA
IT'LL MATTER TO ME!!!

A beat.

A BLACK MAN from across the RESTAURANT snaps a picture.

BLACK MAN
I always told you he was FUCKING
CRAZY.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAR - NIGHT

LUCA is FAST WALKING towards the CAR. He's PISSED.

AMARA
LUCA! Come on.

AMARA tries catching up.

AMARA (CONT'D)
LUCA! STOP!

LUCA stops.

LUCA
What?
(somber)

LUCA shoulders are hunched like he's bracing for another HIT.

A beat.

AMARA
You need to grow up.

LUCA looks at HER. No response.

A beat.

They get in the car. It's EERILY quiet--

CUT TO:

INT. CAR - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

--The only noise is the TRAFFIC OUTSIDE as they drive.

For MINUTES they sit in SILENCE.

AMARA sighs.

AMARA
I'm sorry.

LUCA doesn't respond.

AMARA looks at him.

AMARA (CONT'D)
LUCA.

LUCA finally looks back.

LUCA
What?

AMARA
Do you...
(pauses)
...want to go out?

LUCA can't believe it.

LUCA
You.
(a stunned, happy scoff)
You, want to go out?

AMARA can't believe it either.

AMARA
I don't know I mean, I'm only here
for a couple days--

LUCA
Yes. Finally, my fun sister is
back.

AMARA
I'm always fun.
(firmly)

LUCA
Yeah. When you're not trying to be
Mom.

AMARA rolls her EYES. They feel like SIBLINGS AGAIN.

FADE TO:

EXT. CLUB - NIGHT

A NEWS REPORTER, DARYL, stands outside a GRAND CLUB.

He clears his THROAT and SPITS.

HE PICKS HIS NOSE and SWALLOWS it for GOOD LUCK.

DARYL
Do I have anything in my TEETH?
(smiles big)
Make sure you get this VERTICAL
too, for SOCIAL.

CAMERAMAN (O.S)
You're live in 5..4..3

This is DARYL's MOMENT.

2.

1.

DARYL
Hello, everyone my name is DARYL
from BRN News and today...SHIT
that's him...FOCUS TONY--

TONY pans the CAMERA as we see AMARA and LUCA step out of a
CAR.

DARYL (CONT'D)
--LUCA STARR, the GREAT PIANO
PRODIGY, has not been seen in
YEARS.

LUCA and AMARA walk up to enter the club.

DARYL (CONT'D)
COME, TONY, this is our big break
you fuck-wit.

TONY
(southern accent)
Sorry Daryl--

DARYL
Don't talk when we're ROLLING, you
SOUTH SHIT--

They RUN UP to LUCA shoving a MICROPHONE in his FACE.

DARYL (CONT'D)
What makes you CONFIDENT?

LUCA looks like a DEER in HEADLIGHTS.

AMARA puts a hand over the CAMERA and they STEP IN.

CUT TO:

INT. CLUB - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

AMARA AND LUCA walk in the CLUB like ROYALTY.

Everyone is WATCHING. They're EXOTIC ANIMALS in a ZOO.

Like MOSES, they ENTER.

AMARA
Don't leave me.

LUCA
Why would I leave you?

AMARA
Whenever we do stuff like this, you
say you're not going to leave, and
then you leave.

LUCA
(serious)
I'm not going to leave.

AMARA
I don't even like going to stuff
like this...

LUCA
(questioning)
You asked to go?

They arrive at a PRIVATE SECTION in the BACK.

AMARA
I know. I know.

ALL OF A SUDDEN, AMARA's phone BUZZES.

AMARA (CONT'D)
I have to take this--

LUCA
I'm going to the BATHROOM.

AMARA
I love you.

LUCA
I love you MORE.

AMARA
I love you more than the ENTIRE
WORLD.

She KISSES him on FOREHEAD and they go their SEPARATE WAYS.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

LUCA walks in to WASH his HANDS, like a SURGEON, he SCRUBS.
He washes his right BICEP just as STERN.

He GRABS some paper towel and--

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM STALL - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

--walks in the STALL, LUCA fiddles in his POCKETS, he fishes
out a TINY GLASSINE BAG, SPOON, LIGHTER, and NEEDLE.

LUCA sits DOWN and take his KNIFE and picks out some PIECES
from the BAG and places them on the SPOON.

BLACK TAR.

LUCA lights the SPOON with the LIGHTER. The TAR BUBBLES.

LUCA's EYES REEK OF SHAME.

He PULLS BACK the PLUNGER, the TAR FILLS the SYRINGE.

LUCA takes his RIGHT SHOE LACE off and WRAPS it around his
RIGHT BICEP.

LUCA INJECTS, he winces, a SMALL BLOND POND gushes OUT.

LUCA's PAIN quickly transfers to EUPHORIA.

He SLIDES down, the WORLD FADES.

LUCA's CHEEK is on the DIRTY FLOOR, on a PUDDLE OF PISS.

His leg TAPS like a BUNNY.

He grabs the BAND-AID's AMARA bought.

He places a SPONGEBOB BAND-AID on the INJECTION.

LUCA is LOCKED IN TIME.

We PULL BACK revealing his LIFE in those FIVE ITEMS and watch him ASCEND.

SUPERIMPOSED TITLE CARD: "PIANISSIMO"

A beat.

ALL OF A SUDDEN--

BUZZ.

BUZZ.

BUZZ.

LUCA's phone is RINGING. Like JELLO, he moves to GRAB IT. And like a SLUG manages to SIT on the TOILET.

STRUGGLING, he FINALLY opens his PHONE, it's AMARA:

AMARA

LUCA. You're not going to believe this.

LUCA is BARELY HOLDING ON, MOUTH OPEN, HEAD JERKING BACK AND FORTH.

AMARA (CONT'D)

I'm already on the way, I have to go SETUP but they want YOU.

LUCA

(drowsy)

What?

AMARA

You're going to PERFORM **TONIGHT**,
some MIRACLE, their last PERFORMER
got SICK or too high or something
but you're ON.

LUCA

Wow.

AMARA

You have an HOUR--

LUCA SLIPS and DROPS the phone in the TOILET.

LUCA

(under his breath)

Fuck me.

The TOILET has more SHIT in it than a COW FARM.

The PHONE BUZZES again in the BROWN SOUP.

LUCA's head is SPINNING.

LUCA is moving like a RAG DOLL.

He reaches into the bowl like a FRANTIC OBSTETRICIAN.

His ARM, WRIST DEEP IN SHIT.

He SLIPS and FALLS BACK ON THE PISSY FLOOR, BELLY UP.

His SHITTY HAND like a BROWN CRAYON on the DIRTY FLOOR.

EXHAUSTED.

A beat.

HE MUSTERS the STRENGTH to STAND UP and goes to the TOILET.

ALL OF A SUDDEN--

HE BARFS in the TOILET, placing a GARNISH over the SHIT and
HIS PHONE.

BUZZ. BUZZ. BUZZ.

SECOND ROUND OF BARF DRENCHES the PHONE.

A beat.

He REACHES AGAIN. Like a FUCKED UP CLAW MACHINE, he gets the
PRIZE.

He drops it on the FLOOR and STUMBLES. HIS FACE RETURNS TO THE YELLOW WATER.

LUCA like the CREATION OF ADAM moves his ENTIRE BODY TOWARDS THE PHONE...the LIFE he wants a DIAL AWAY...

HE TRIES TO REACH, HE CAN'T.

HE LAYS on HIS BACK. CHEST BUMPING. HEAD RINGING.

LUCA ELONGATING HIS ENTIRE BODY; TRIES AGAIN.

HE PICKS IT UP. And SMUDGES the BROWN CAMERA so his PHONE UNLOCKS.

HE SLOWLY DIALS. SHE PICKS UP--

LUCA (CONT'D)

I'm on the waaa-
(swallowing, holding the
THIRD ROUND in)

AMARA

Where are you?

LUCA

I'm going to bee-
(out of breath)

AMARA

I can't HEAR YOU? Where are YOU?

LUCA

(angrily)
I'll FUCKING BE THERE! Tell them-
(pauses)
I'm FUCKING LUCA STARR!

He HANGS UP-

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Like a WAVING INFLATABLE ARM-FLAILING tube man, he scrubs his SHIT ARM. He PUTS his FACE in the FAUCET like a DOG.

He reaches for the PAPER TOWELS and-

CRACK.

WE GO TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. BLACK - UNKNOWN

UNKNOWN
He's not BREATHING--

A LOUD THUMPING...

UNKNOWN 2
Come on...Come on...COME ON!

A bright FLASHING LIGHT rolls over BLACK.

ALL OF A SUDDEN--

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM - UNKNOWN

LUCA BURSTS AWAKE and COUGHS his LUNGS OUT.

TWO PARAMEDICS lock eyes with LUCA just as STUNNED as HIM.

The BATHROOM has TENS of PEOPLE FLASHING CAMERAS, like a SAD CONCERT.

LUCA
What TIME IS IT?

LUCA winces and FEELS the BACK of his HEAD.

THICK AMBER RED.

PARAMEDIC
MR. STARR, you just OD'D--

LUCA rips the IV out of his ARM.

LUCA
I have to go...I'm fine...I have
to...

With EVERYTHING HE HAS, LUCA stumbles out of the BATHROOM into--

PARAMEDIC (O.S)
MR. STARR, STOP--

CUT TO:

INT. CLUB - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

BANGING MUSIC.

EVERYONE IS FLASHING PICTURES.

He's walking like a ZOMBIE towards the FRONT. INCH by INCH...

LUCA tries to put HANDS over his EYES, but the LIGHT KEEPS COMING IN. HUNDREDS OF EYES watch him SQUIRM.

He APPROACHES the FRONT. EACH STEP, ONE BATTLE AFTER ANOTHER.

BOUNCER

LUCA, are you OK? --

-- LUCA waves him off and --

CUT TO:

EXT. CLUB - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

LUCA

-- I'm good, I just need to...

He SLUGS toward the PERFORMING ARTS CENTER...his NORTH STAR..

He's VOMITING while he WALKS. **HIS LONGEST JOURNEY.**

CUT TO:

EXT. BACK OF GRAND HALL - NIGHT - LATER

PALE LUCA ARRIVES. Feels his POCKETS. No PHONE.

LUCA

(at the top of his LUNGS)

AMARA! AMARA!

(pauses)

AMARA!

LUCA is SCREAMING at the BACK ENTRANCE. He's in TEARS.

LUCA (CONT'D)

I'm HERE. I'm...

He COLLAPSES.

AMARA walks out the BACKDOOR. SHE RUNS TO HIM.

AMARA
(BIG HUG)
LUCA. Are you OK?

He GETS UP.

LUCA
Yeah.
(out of breath)
I'm ready...I'm ready...

AMARA
It's over LUCA.
(pauses)
They're saying you shot up?
(disbelief)
I mean I thought you just did weed
and some pills, but this?

LUCA shakes his HEAD.

LUCA
They're lying, let me just go
inside-

SHE STOPS HIM.

AMARA
They're not LUCA. They're not...

A beat.

AMARA (CONT'D)
...When I look at you-
(pauses)

AMARA (CONT'D)
-This boy, my sweet little brother,
this boy, that used to play the
most BEAUTIFUL SONGS, I want him
back.

She pauses. They're both looking INSIDE each other.

AMARA (CONT'D)
And I don't know what I did or
didn't do, and I don't how to FIX
IT. I don't know how to HELP
YOU...tell me what I have to do
LUCA--

LUCA feels the PAIN OF THE WORLD, his SISTERS PAIN.

LUCA
I'm SORRY...

And for ONCE, he doesn't know what to SAY.

LUCA (CONT'D)
...I'm SORRY...

A beat.

LUCA (CONT'D)
...I just want to be that BOY that
can PLAY...

A beat.

LUCA (CONT'D)
...I just want to play one more
time...I love you...
(BIG HUG)

AMARA
...I love you more...

LUCA
...I love you more than the ENTIRE
WORLD...
(crying laughing)

CUT TO:

INT. GRAND HALL - NIGHT - LATER

HUNDREDS of POSH GUESTS take their seats in the THEATER.

An ANNOUNCER takes the STAGE.

ANNOUNCER
A GUEST who hasn't been on this
STAGE in exactly 17 YEARS.
(pauses)
Let's welcome, LUCA STARR!

The room ERUPTS in APPLAUSE.

LUCA takes the STAGE. He sits next to the PIANO and hits a
SINGLE CHORD.

The CROWD, CONFUSED.

He STOPS and takes a DEEP BREATH...

LUCA looks into the CROWD, and in the FRONT ROW he sees the SMALL BOY from his SCREEN and his MOTHER next to him...

The MOTHER meets LUCA's eyes, gives the smallest nod.

In that moment, he LAUGHS, SMILES and CRIES all at the same time.

And he TURNS back into that 6-YEAR-OLD PRODIGY.

He BEGINS to PLAY, and he's NEVER FELT LOUDER...

SMASH CUT TO:

TITLE CARD: **PIANISSIMO**

CREDITS ROLL. THE END.