

Ransom in D Major

Violin Concerto

Story in One Sentence:

Five kids, one priceless cello, a symphony of trouble.

Story Synopsis:

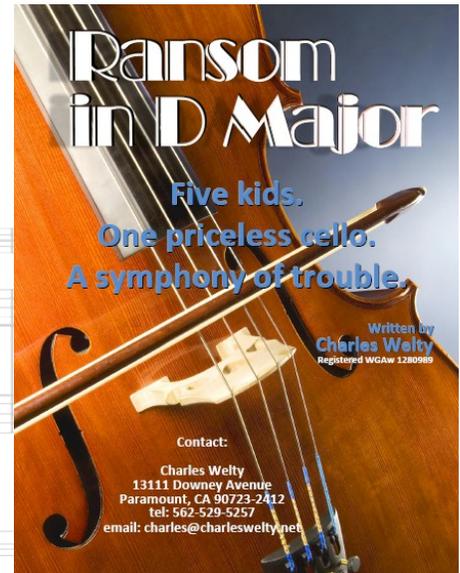
In this comedy-adventure, five Philadelphia area middle school students face a problem: their music program is being canceled because of financial cutbacks. What can they do to save their musical education?

Somewhat envious of his friends who possess musical talents that he himself doesn't have, and wishing desperately to fit in with them, streetwise **REGGIE** reluctantly leads four "wannabe" junior performers who have the most to lose from the cutbacks. **CASEY** is an aspiring cellist. **MARTIN** wants to be a concert violinist. **PILAR** plays the oboe. And **MICHELLE**, an aspiring concert pianist, has secret hopes to be an orchestra conductor.

The young performers' hopes are dashed by the cancellation of their end of school year concert recital. Having no place else to go, the four performers ask their friend Reggie to help them find a solution. When the kids attend a concert featuring **ZUILL BAILEY**, the famous American concert cellist, Reggie comes up with a desperate plan: kidnap Bailey's prized cello (made in 1693 by the Venetian artisan Matteo Goffriller) and hold it for ransom.

Complications arise, of course. Believing the priceless cello has been destroyed in an accident, all seems hopeless for the youngsters, and especially Reggie, who put the plan together. But the understanding concert cellist has his own plans to teach the youngsters a lesson in honesty. Calling in some favors from his professional associates, Bailey helps Reggie put together a last minute concert where some of the finest classical performers of our generation perform on stage with the youngsters for a benefit concert to save the music program.

Watching his friends perform with the experts, Reggie is racked with mixed emotions. He is happy for his friends, but believes he does not fit in with all the talent around him. As he leaves, alone, he is stopped by a lone figure in the back of the concert hall. The man quizzes Reggie, forcing him to admit to the misplaced talents that the young man used to orchestrate the ransom. We learn the identity of the man who has taken such an interest in Reggie: it's **QUINCY JONES**, the very famous record producer, who invites Reggie to intern with him -- as a record producer. And so Reggie finds his niche.



Ransom in D Major

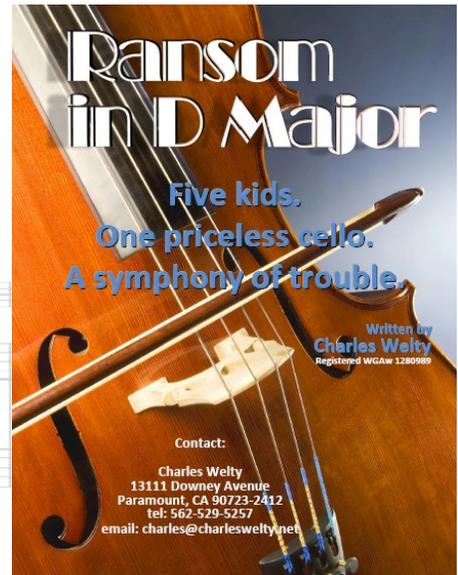
Story in One Sentence:

Five kids, one priceless cello, a symphony of trouble. 77

Story Synopsis:

In this comedy-adventure, five Philadelphia area middle school students face a problem: their music program is being canceled because of financial cutbacks. After failing to raise money to save their music program, the kids embark on a hilarious caper as they kidnap a priceless cello and hold it for ransom.

ACT ONE



On the side of what looks like a mountain, 13-year-old REGGIE SIMPSON climbs a rock face with his buddy MARTIN WINSLOW as CASEY RICHARDS, also 13, watches from above. But it's not a rock face, it's a climbing wall in a park, and Reggie and Martin are safely tethered with ropes. Reggie moves swiftly to the top when Martin slips. Reggie refuses to stop his buddy from slipping. At the top, Casey has lost the bet; he pays Reggie for the loss.

Later, we're high above Philadelphia, approaching the downtown area and a city bus. REGGIE SIMPSON, 13 years old and eighth grade cool waits for the bus. When it arrives, he admires an ad on the side of the bus for an upcoming concert by ZUILL BAILEY. Reggie taps the photo of Bailey with an exclamation of "My man!" and then squeezes to the front of the line of passengers. He presses a flower into the hair of the little old lady in front of the line and steps into the bus.

We see his friends CASEY, a cellist, and MARTIN, a violinist, in the Philadelphia Middle School student orchestra. Also present are Reggie's friends PILAR, who plays the oboe, and MICHELLE, a pianist with hopes to be a conductor one day.

Reggie hustles two passengers on the bus, attempting to make a sale. He succeeds with only one of his marks; a man buys a tie for half Reggie's asking price. Reggie accepts the offer reluctantly.

In an insert, we see Bailey running the scales in his dressing room at the concert hall. The man is passionate, even when doing basic musical exercises. Amazing...

The bus arrives at the Philadelphia Symphony Center where Zuill Bailey is holding his concert, which is sold out and held over for another week. His friends go inside, but he is delayed by an encounter with SGT. TRICIA PINKOWSKI, an attractive cop who works juvie. This is not her first encounter with Reggie. Some good natured banter



Zuill Bailey

ensues between them. We learn that Reggie loves music, has very strong opinions about certain types of music and about Bailey, his favorite classic performer, but we also learn that he can't play a note of music. We see a hint of affection from Pinkowski for Reggie, who gives her a comp ticket to Bailey's concert. It seems she was there because she had come to pick up tickets to a Springsteen concert.

Meanwhile, at a Philadelphia art museum, a burglar breaks in and steals a number of paintings in one of a series of thefts.

At the Philadelphia Middle School, instructor DAVID BLACK instructs the students about Brahms Opus 77, a Concerto in D Major for violin and cello. It's a very difficult piece to play. We learn some history about it. Casey, Martin, Pilar and Michelle are there. Reggie is there, too. We learn Reggie has been promoting an upcoming Spring recital, where his friends will be presenting some music that they have been practicing.

At home after school, we meet Reggie's ne'er-do-well father, ALBERT SIMPSON. He's more than a little bit drunk. On an extravagant big-screen TV, Simpson is watching a news report about the museum break in. Simpson offers pizza to Reggie. Reggie barely speaks to him as he heads upstairs to his sanctuary.

In his room, Reggie wakes up his computer, punches up his webcam, and phones Michelle. In her room, Michelle is conducting an imaginary orchestra as Brahms Opus 77 plays. We learn a little about her dream to conduct one day. Reggie invites her to Bein and Fushi, a high end music store, on Saturday so they can give her a birthday present.

At Bein and Fushi, the kids meet Zuill Bailey. They recognize him from the concert, of course. They overhear a conversation about the delivery of Bailey's cello to his hotel after it has been serviced by a technician at the shop. Reggie, with a great deal of bravado, introduces his "people" to Bailey. Bailey learns from Reggie's bravado that Michelle has a not-so-secret dream of being an orchestra conductor one day. Using JoAnn Falletta of the Boston Philharmonic as an example of a female conductor, Bailey encourages Michelle to follow her dream. He gives Michelle an autographed CD of his latest release. GEOFFREY FUSHI gives the kids some free tickets to the next Zuill Bailey concert in exchange for proof that they are visiting another educational museum. Reggie proudly displays five tickets to the Field Museum of Natural History. He calls the requirement extortion, but his other friends like to visit the dinosaurs there.

The next week, the kids are in the music room practicing their violin, cello, oboe and piano chamber music when Mr. Black comes in. He posts a message from the school district informing them of the cancellation of the music program in general, and the Spring recital in particular. The kids are heartbroken about this. Reggie, overhearing the announcement, enters to find his friends in tears. "It ain't over 'til it's over," he tells them firmly.

ACT TWO

The five kids tour Philadelphia's Museum of Archaeology. We see them examining various exhibits in the museum. They are clearly enjoying paying the price for getting free concert tickets in spite of themselves. At one of the exhibits, Reggie loses his school ID

card near a display case.

Later that night, the museum is robbed. Reggie's ID is found by LIEUTENANT ARCHER, a tough-talking detective. He calls Pinkowski and tells her about the ID. Juvie is her specialty, so he asks her if she knows "Alistair Reginald Simpson." Pinkowski tells him that she'll be right down to pick up the ID and look into the matter.

In their school principal's office, Casey, Martin, Michelle, Pilar, and Reggie confront Philadelphia Middle School Principal ADRIENNE MURPHY about the music program cuts. She has no sympathy for them. And when the school's baseball coach comes in to thank her for over seventy thousand dollars of superfluous sports funding, his ignorance of music and its value angers the kids. Reggie gets madder and madder as he hears example after example of the waste of money in the athletic program. The last straw for the kids is the delivery of a luxury automobile to Murphy, leased at the expense of the music program.

Saturday morning finds the kids on a city bus, headed for Daley Center Plaza. There, the kids put on a free concert near the famed Picasso sculpture. Later that morning, they canvas the downtown business district for money to support their music program. Their haul is meager, only about eighty dollars.

The next school day, Reggie forlornly brings his money in to Mr. Black. He removes his well-worn Philadelphia Phillies baseball cap and dumps out his meager haul from his fund-raising efforts. Reggie is disappointed. He feels like it was all a waste of time. He tells Black he's going home: "Nothing for me here. Nothing for me at home, either." Reggie calls himself a lost cause, comparing himself to the Chicago Cubs.

"Tinker to Evers to Chance," Black tells him. He goes on to recite an obscure, but once very famous, poem about a thrilling double play between the Giants and the Cubs. It becomes Reggie's favorite quote once Black tells him what it means. Reggie wants to know why Black, a music man, knows so much about baseball when the school's baseball coach knows nothing about music. Black tells him it's all about balance in life. "You can't be all music, all sports, all academics," he tells him. "That's why cutting the music program is so wrong."

Back at Reggie's house, Simpson's fancy TV plays a news story about the break in at the natural history museum. We move through the house, into the kitchen, and then down into the basement where we find Reggie's father burying the loot from the museum burglary. Now we know that Reggie's father is the burglar. His father mocks Reggie, asking him if he wants some pizza and a beer. But he can't call out from the house; the phone has been cut off because he didn't pay the phone bill.

Upstairs in his room, Reggie sees a news report about an old lady's kidnapped dog. She paid a ransom for the return of her pet. This gives Reggie an idea. He excitedly calls Michelle on his cell phone. He tells her he knows how he can rescue the music program. He declines to tell her how he is going to accomplish this miracle, citing "plausible deniability."

Reggie ransacks his room for what he needs: magazines, paper, glue, scissors and gloves. He crafts a ransom demand for Zuill Bailey's cello. He's going to kidnap it and hold it for ransom.

The day that Bailey's cello is returned to the Sofitel Hotel after being serviced finds Reggie dressed a bit differently from what we've come to expect. He's on a city bus, on the way to the hotel. He stops at a Thrift Store and picks up a trench coat, a long blond wig, and a cap.

When he arrives at the Sofitel, Reggie is way out of his league. But he stumbles through his caper anyway. He finds a house phone and calls the NIGHT MANAGER to see if the cello has been delivered. It was, about two hours ago. Reggie hangs up and then calls the house-keeping office. He cons the housekeeper to send some fresh towels up to room 247. He goes upstairs and, while the housekeeper is servicing the towels, he peeks into the open room. He sees a shiny titanium cello case and assumes it's the antique cello. He drops off the ransom note, takes the cello, and heads for the exit.

He stops long enough to unhitch the wheels on the base of the cello case, standing it upright. He then quickly dresses the cello case in the trench coat, wig and cap and heads for the stairwell, escorting his "girl" as he goes. In the stairwell, an ELDERLY COUPLE come upon him. He feigns making out with his "girl". The lady is disgusted; the old man encourages him.

At the front desk, the NIGHT MANAGER calls the hotel's security. Something about the call wasn't quite right. A HOTEL SECURITY OFFICER sees Reggie leading his "girl" toward a service entrance. Something about it doesn't look right. He sends the feed to the Night Manager's PDA. The Night Manager rapidly pursues Reggie with the hotel's HOUSE DETECTIVE, but they are stopped at a door that has been blocked by Reggie.

Reggie escapes, moving into the back alley. But he hasn't counted on two things: first, one of the wheels on the case breaks. Second, a number of delivery trucks line one side of the alley, barely making enough room for one particular delivery truck that is backing down the alley. Reggie sees there's no room. He tries to go back inside, but the door has locked behind him. He stumbles quickly down the alley, now carrying his "girl" as if she were a dead body.

Reggie is about to be run over by the delivery truck when he leaps into a small recessed doorway in the alley. The cello won't fit and his "girl" is ripped from his hands as the delivery truck moves past the doorway. The "girl" is run over by the back wheel and then by the front wheel. Reggie runs away, horrified and shocked at what has happened. The DELIVERY MAN lifts what he thinks is a dead girl. He sees the cap and wig fall off of the cello case and asks in a heavy Jersey accent "What? I run over somethin' here?"

ACT THREE

At a rehearsal at the concert hall with AWADAGIN PRATT, the famed pianist, Bailey receives a phone call from Lt. Archer. Bailey learns there has been an attempt to kidnap his antique cello. Bailey is puzzled, but he doesn't say why. He leaves for the hotel to meet with Archer so he can get down to the bottom of this.

At the Sofitel Hotel, Archer is reviewing the surveillance camera images when Pinkowski arrives. Bailey also arrives, where he is recognized by Pinkowski from his poster at the concert hall. Bailey is informed about the kidnapping attempt and the high end burglaries. Pinkowski doesn't believe Reggie is involved. Archer demonstrates the means, the motive, and the opportunity. He says the surveillance video shows that Reggie stole the cello. He says there's

only one way to find out if the theft of the cello is related to the theft at the museum where Reggie's ID card was found. He tells her to call Judge Penner, get a search warrant, and meet him at Reggie's house. Archer tells Pinkowski to pick Reggie up and bring him downtown. But Bailey says, "No... bring him to me." He tells Pinkowski that he's leaving three tickets to his concert for Pinkowski, the judge, and Reggie. He wants to deal with this kid directly.

At Reggie's house, Archer's team arrives, searches the place and finds the stolen artwork and museum items in the basement. Pinkowski finds Reggie upstairs, terrified at what he has done and what is happening to him. Pinkowski takes Reggie into custody. She tells Archer she's taking him to Bailey on the judge's orders.

Later that evening, a high end jewelry store is being burglarized. LITTLE JACK and his wife AMANDA, a pair of midgets wielding enormous 50-caliber Smith and Wesson pistols, capture the burglar. It turns out to be Reggie's father. As a half a dozen pistols are cocked at him, he laments, "Geez, you got some Neighborhood Watch program here."

After the concert, Bailey confronts Reggie. He shows Pinkowski, Reggie and JUDGE PENNER the two cellos; one is a practice cello made from high-tech nano-carbon composites. It looks and sounds like wood, but it's practically indestructible. And with the titanium cases, they are even safer from hard knocks. He shows him the antique Goffriller cello, demonstrating the difference between the two instruments.

Bailey, Pinkowski and the Judge work out a deal to keep Reggie out of court, but it will involve some work on Reggie's part. Penner agrees to the deal if Reggie will keep his part of the bargain. Pinkowski thanks the judge for agreeing to the highly irregular deal. Judge Penner tells Pinkowski that if the deal doesn't work, Pinkowski will be making dinner for her for every Thanksgiving, Christmas and every other holiday until Reggie turns eighteen. Pinkowski tells her, "Thanks, Grandma." So that's how she got this irregular deal agreed to!

Bailey puts together a concert to benefit the Philadelphia Middle School music program with the help of Black, Pinkowski, Reggie, and his "people". We see them briefly in rehearsals.

On the night of the concert, our four musicians are positioned up front in the center of the stage. Casey plays next to Bailey, his hero. Martin plays next to Perlman, his violinist hero. Pilar has her own master next to her, and although Michelle has Awadagin Pratt as her mentor, there is only one piano on the stage. There is no place for her to play.

But on the sidelines is JOANN FALLETTA of the Buffalo Philharmonic. She presents Michelle with her own baton. It's made of translucent quartz, and it glows with an electric blue hue as she takes her place at the conductor's stand. Michelle is going to conduct a symphony orchestra.

As the concert progresses, Reggie sees his friends achieve their dreams. Quoting the famous baseball poem, he sees the concert come together like magic, just like the famous double play. But as he watches his friends perform with the experts, Reggie is also racked with mixed emotions. He is happy for his friends, but believes he does not fit in with all the talent around him.

Lt. Archer confronts Reggie one last time. He has come to make Reggie face the music, as it were. Archer takes him to the alley behind the concert hall, where he meets a lone figure arriving in a black limousine. The man quizzes Reggie, forcing Reggie to admit to the misplaced talents that the young man used to orchestrate the ransom. We learn the identity of the man who has taken such an interest in Reggie: it's QUINCY JONES, famed record producer. Jones invites Reggie to intern with him for the summer -- as a record producer. Reggie can still work with the music he loves. He just needs a little direction. And so Reggie finds his niche. 🎵

J. Brahms (1833-1897)

Allegro non troppo

The image shows a musical score for Violin and Piano. The title is "Allegro non troppo". The score is in D major and 3/4 time. It consists of four systems of music. The first system shows the beginning of the piece with a piano marking of *mp*. The second system features a piano marking of *p dolce*. The third system has a piano marking of *f*. The fourth system has a piano marking of *ff marcato*. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.