

Overture for an Undertaker
or "The Case of the Tenth Symphony"

by Butch Maxwell and Bert Furioli

At a Glance

Genre: Interactive Musical Comedy Murder Mystery

Running Time: Approximately 2 hours including dinner/intermission

Cast: 2W, 3M

Setting: A fundraising gala celebrating the discovery of Beethoven's long-lost Tenth Symphony.

Audience Participation: Extensive

Music: Musical parody and audience sing-alongs

Technical Requirements: Minimal

Ideal Venues:

- Dinner theatres
- Community theatres
- Fundraisers
- Symphony guilds
- Civic organizations

The Mystery Theatre Experience

An evening with Mystery Theatre Unlimited begins before the first scene. Upon arrival, guests are seated and receive a program, Detective Card, pen, and one Character Fun Fact Card at their place setting. As the cast mingles in character, guests are encouraged to read their Fun Fact aloud, exchange cards with other tables, and meet the suspects before the mystery officially begins.

The Evening's Format

A typical performance follows this sequence:

- **Guest Arrival & Character Mingling** – Characters circulate, meet the audience, and establish relationships before the mystery begins.
- **Act One** – The crime is introduced.
- **Dinner / Intermission** – Characters remain available for informal interaction as appropriate.
- **Act Two** – The investigation develops and additional clues emerge.
- **Question & Answer Period** – Audience members question the suspects directly.
- **Guessing Break** – Guests complete Detective Cards identifying the killer, motive, and other requested deductions.
- **Act Three** – The solution is revealed, followed by recognition of successful detectives.

Audience Participants

Audience participation is always voluntary. Cast members are encouraged to select enthusiastic guests and create moments that allow participants to succeed while keeping the focus on laughter rather than embarrassment.

Several audience members are invited to participate directly in the performance. These roles require no rehearsal and are assigned during the evening by the cast. Participation is voluntary and designed to enhance the comedy without placing undue pressure on guests.

Typical audience participation includes:

- Selected guests serving as the **Auxiliary Sextet**, performing on kazoos during the ceremonial unveiling.
- Dinner guests who briefly interact with the principal characters during pre-show and Act One.
- Audience questioning of the suspects following Act Two.
- Completion of Detective Cards before the solution is revealed.

Producer's Note: Localizing the Humor

Overture for an Undertaker was intentionally written to feel as though it belongs to the community producing it. No plot point depends on any specific local reference.

The original script contains numerous references to Wheeling, West Virginia, but these are intended as examples rather than fixed settings. Producers are encouraged to substitute recognizable local names, landmarks, restaurants, streets, businesses, civic organizations, and prominent families with equivalents from their own community.

For example, the surname **Shepherd-Boggs-Zane** combines three well-known Wheeling family names into a single exaggerated symbol of inherited wealth. Similar combinations can easily be created using prominent local family names. References to neighborhood streets, pizza restaurants, local institutions, and regional landmarks may likewise be customized without affecting the story or the mystery.

Audiences consistently enjoy discovering their own community inside the play, and these substitutions often produce some of the evening's biggest laughs.

Characters

The cast consists of five principal characters.

Mac McGuffin — A longtime theatre stagehand whose accidental discovery of Beethoven's long-lost Tenth Symphony makes him an unlikely celebrity—and perhaps something more than he first appears.

Mrs. Tallulah Shepherd-Boggs-Zane — An ambitious socialite determined to leverage the discovery into leadership of the Symphony Auxiliary. She has inherited money, confidence, and very little self-awareness.

Leonard Beerstein — A flamboyant world-famous conductor whose ego is exceeded only by his vocabulary.

Tammy Cash — A newly minted lottery millionaire with boundless enthusiasm, absolutely no social filter, and surprising instincts beneath the surface.

Elliot Brick — A self-styled private detective who narrates his own life like a 1940s film noir, regardless of whether reality cooperates.

Character Fun Facts

Before the performance begins, each guest receives a program, a Detective Card, a pen, and **one Character Fun Fact Card** at their place setting.

Character Fun Fact Cards serve two purposes: They introduce the suspects before the mystery begins, and they encourage conversation among guests while performers mingle in character.

Each card contains an amusing bit of background about one of the suspects. Guests are encouraged to read their Fun Fact aloud, exchange cards with other tables, and collect additional Fun Facts before the mystery begins.

Performers should be familiar with all of the Fun Facts, as they often become natural topics of conversation during pre-show interaction.

Fun Facts

Mrs. Tallulah Shepherd-Boggs-Zane - is a widow, many times over. She just buried her seventh husband, who died when he used a cigarette lighter to check the barrel of a muzzleloader and the weapon discharged in his face.

Leonard Beerstein – Enjoys conducting familiar music with unusual instrumentation. He recently interpreted the *1812 Overture* arranged for ukulele, Theremin, and didgeridoo.

Mac McGuffin - A stagehand at the Capitol Theatre, he is hoping to use the reward money promised to him to develop a new breakfast fast food: Egg McGuffin.

Tammy Cash - While enjoying her newfound wealth, she has not lost touch with her roots. She has them retouched monthly at the Perm 'n Squirm.

Tammy Cash – She is considering investing some of her fortune into developing a new fast food franchise: the world's first drive-through specializing in road kill.

Elliot Brick - Expelled from Police Academy for reckless endangerment of the English language, he recently graduated from the Detective College of America, *magnum force laude*.

Act 1

SFX: Music "Harlem Nocturne." (fades under)

BRICK enters.

BRICK

It was a dark and stormy night... No. wait, that was Charles Schultz... It was a night like any other night. Another Saturday night, and I don't have nobody. But I've got some money because I just got paid.... It was a typical sleepy evening in Wheeling, West Virginia. The Nailers were getting hammered and Moondog was patrolling the streets. For me, Elliot Brick, private dick, it looked like just another night of booze, babes and DiCarlo's pizza. Little did I know that it would end in larceny, murder and a few twisted songs. It was in this very room that it all happened. I can still remember it as though it was all just about to happen. I call it "The Case of the Symphony for the Devil."

Music out.

Brick exits.

SHEPHERD-BOGGS-ZANE and BEERSTEIN enter.

BEERSTEIN

So, then my yacht ran out of gas. And there I was, stranded on Heritage Port with only 12 bottles of Chateau Lafayette '62.

SHEPHERD-BOGGS-ZANE

So how did you survive, Mr. Beerstein?

BEERSTEIN

Only by strict rationing did I endure my three-hour tour.

SHEPHERD-BOGGS-ZANE

I admire your fighting spirit. It gives me a Wheeling feeling all over. Either that, or my eczema is flaring up again.

BEERSTEIN

I can hardly wait to see that original manuscript in the maestro's own handwriting! Imagine! The sheet

music for Beethoven's Tenth Symphony! Where is it?

SHEPHERD-BOGGS-ZANE

Oh, no one can see it until the official unveiling! The music is being carefully guarded by a private detective. Its unveiling will be the highlight of tonight's festivities.

BEERSTEIN

Along with my guest conducting.

SHEPHERD-BOGGS-ZANE

Of course, you handsome man! I must confess, this is an important night for me, Mr. Beerstein. I am new to the Symphony Auxiliary and I want to make a good impression. Of course, I am already from one of the oldest and most prestigious families in Wheeling. My great great-grandfather, Abraham Eoff, established the first still in Wheeling.

BEERSTEIN

Eoff? After whom the street was named?

SHEPHERD-BOGGS-ZANE

Yes. And my maternal great-grandfather developed Wheeling's first knockwurst festival. That was Chaplin Jacob Wood.

BEERSTEIN

Again, after whom the street was named?

SHEPHERD-BOGGS-ZANE

All three streets. And did I mention my great uncle, Festus Henry Nationalroad?

BEERSTEIN

Let me guess –

SHEPHERD-BOGGS-ZANE

But all this heritage means nothing! Because in non-profits, we know what really matters – money! Someone else's money, that is.

They laugh.

At any rate, this discovery has given me the perfect opportunity to show the board that I can raise huge sums of money. So, I invited a woman here who just won the West Virginia Lottery!

BEERSTEIN

So I hear! And I look forward to meeting her.

SHEPHERD-BOGGS-ZANE

No, you don't. I'm afraid that she may be a problem. Even though she's fabulously rich, she comes from a rather – humble background. She hasn't the first sense of social grace. She thinks a minuet is how long it takes to cook rice.

BEERSTEIN

So, she's common? Perhaps you could hide her in the kitchen.

SHEPHERD-BOGGS-ZANE

After I met her, I realized my error. She insisted that if she were to make a large donation, she wanted be a part of the unveiling ceremony. Among other stipulations. She wants to do an interpretive dance as you conduct the music.

[Pause.]

She asked if we had a pole.

BEERSTEIN

Does she think she's donating to Jill's Gentlemen's Club? Tell me about your music historian who discovered the Tenth Symphony!

SHEPHERD-BOGGS-ZANE

Actually, he's just a stagehand who was visiting Vienna. He thought that was where they made the tiny little sausages. He stumbled upon it after drinking too much port. He brought it back to our symphony out of loyalty to us.

BEERSTEIN

Oh, my! A stagehand? You mean he's a so called "regular guy?"

[Shuddering.]

I suppose he expects a reward.

SHEPHERD-BOGGS-ZANE

I'm afraid we have nothing for him. Besides, we wouldn't want him getting near our tax bracket, would we?

BEERSTEIN

[Chuckling.]

I quite understand. Perhaps we should simply give him a nice bottle of sparkling white wine.

Shepherd-Boggs-Zane :

Make it domestic. He thinks Bordeaux is where the prostitutes work.

They laugh.

MCGUFFIN enters.

Here is that dear man now! Mr. Beerstein, this is Mr. McGuffin.

BEERSTEIN

Ah! Mr. McGuffin!

[Patting him on the back.]

You are indeed the sweat of the earth.

MCGUFFIN

Don't you mean "salt?"

BEERSTEIN

[Wiping his hand dry.]

No. In your case, it is sweat.

MCGUFFIN

Hey, I'm sweaty because I work for a living.

SHEPHERD-BOGGS-ZANE

Oh, poor man. It is so much better to just – **live** for a living.

MCGUFFIN

Of course, when I collect my reward money, then I won't have to work anymore, will I? I want to go back to Vienna. I never did find the tiny little sausage factory.

SHEPHERD-BOGGS-ZANE

I am afraid the Auxiliary has reached something of a snafu with regards to your reward money, Mr. McGuffin.

MCGUFFIN

You mean I don't get a reward? "Snafu" must be Italian for "bend over."

BEERSTEIN

You will have eternal gratitude of the entire world of classical music, which is certainly enough for a man as noble as yourself.

MCGUFFIN

[Angrily.]

What? That don't pay my rent, blue blood!

SHEPHERD-BOGGS-ZANE

Ah, no, but it will get you tickets to our Fourth of July symphony.

MCGUFFIN

That's free to get into!

SHEPHERD-BOGGS-ZANE

Is that so? We'll have to change that.

MCGUFFIN

[Storming off]

We'll see about this! Listen, sister, I better get my reward or you're going to be doing the sabre dance. If you get my point.

SHEPHERD-BOGGS-ZANE

No, actually, I do not.

MCGUFFIN

Well, you will! Get the point, that is.

[Pause.]

Really? You don't get it? Point? Sabre? Murder mystery?

McGuffin exits.

BEERSTEIN

Well, that was pointless. That man certainly has a temper to match his hygiene.

SHEPHERD-BOGGS-ZANE

Oh, he'll get over it.

[Flirting.]

Mr. Beerstein, you certainly have a way with working people.

BEERSTEIN

I appreciate the little people. As long as I don't have to be one of them. Why, my father was just a humble farmer and he was able to rise to a position of great wealth and fame with just the sweat of his brow – and a two-point seven million-dollar grant from the Department of Agriculture.

SHEPHERD-BOGGS-ZANE

[Still flirting.]

Mr. Beerstein, you are an inspiration to all of us who have inherited wealth.

TAMMY enters.

TAMMY

Oh, it's gorgeous in here! If this is how you decorate for this party, I can hardly wait to go that that Vietnamese Ball!

BEERSTEIN

Mrs. Shepherd-Boggs-Zane, who is this charming creature?

SHEPHERD-BOGGS-ZANE

You have the "creature" part right.

TAMMY

I'm Tammy Cash. And I got lots of it! As if you couldn't tell by the way I'm dressed.

BEERSTEIN

Allow me to introduce myself.

[Kissing her hand.]

I am Maestro Leonard Beerstein.

TAMMY

Oh, you're real class, ain't you?

BEERSTEIN

Oh? Is my class showing?

SHEPHERD-BOGGS-ZANE

Class dismissed.

TAMMY

You look sorta familiar. Didn't I meet you
somewheres?

BEERSTEIN

Unlikely my dear. I have never been to a monster
truck rally.

TAMMY

I'm never wrong about these things. I just can't place
you. Maybe at the dog track or something?

BEERSTEIN

I'm seldom on your side of the tracks, madam.

TAMMY

Were you the guy who was peeing off the side of the
Suspension Bridge?

BEERSTEIN

I do not "go" in the O-hi-o. Now, if you will excuse
me, I must prepare to conduct!

Beerstein exits.

TAMMY

He don't look like no conductor. Don't they usually
wear them hats when they drive a train?

SHEPHERD-BOGGS-ZANE

*[Indicating a small table, apart from the
others.]*

Ms. Cash, you'll be sitting here.

TAMMY

[Enthusiastically.]

Gee, it's like sitting at the kiddy table on

Thanksgiving! I hate to be a whiner, Mrs. Leopard-Foggy-Lane, but it is going to be hard to socialize with the other people sitting all the way over here.

SHEPHERD-BOGGS-ZANE

[Under her breath.]

Precisely.

TAMMY

What?

SHEPHERD-BOGGS-ZANE

[To Tammy.]

We were over-booked. So, we set up this special table just for you.

TAMMY

Gee, it took you longer to say it the second time.

SHEPHERD-BOGGS-ZANE

This is the table of honor, for our brand-new millionaire donor. You **did** bring your checkbook?

TAMMY

I thought my dinner was – what cha call it – condimentary?

SHEPHERD-BOGGS-ZANE

Not for dinner. I meant for the generous donation you promised.

TAMMY

Oh, yeah. Sure. I ain't never seen a sympathy, but I'll put up some cash if you get a good show outa that conductor, Mr. Bumstead. I like that classy music. Like that Johnny Sebastain Batch.

SHEPHERD-BOGGS-ZANE

[To audience.]

If she yells “Free Bird” during the performance, I will kill her.

[To Tammy.]

Please excuse me. I have some important people to attend to.

Shepherd-Goggs-Zane exits.

TAMMY

Hey! I'm important! I'm a sixty-five millionaire!

[Looking over her table, she finds a croissant.]

Oh look! They got them fancy buns! Hey! I ain't got no butter.

[Walking over to a nearby table.]

Can I borrow some of your creamery butter? You know, I really love these crew-sants. They're just like little hot dog buns that's been doing Yogi.

GUEST # 1

Don't you mean "yoga?"

TAMMY

No, you're thinking of that cartoon character, Yoga Bear. You know, he had that little bear friend, Boo Hoo... Or is that the chocolate drink?

[Pantomiming slapping a tambourine against her butt.]

Of course, my favorite cartoon was always "Josie & the Pussycats." I always wanted to play the tangerine.

McGuffin enters. He strays near Tammy.

MCGUFFIN

Hey, lady, is your biscuit broken?

TAMMY

[Startled.]

Huh? Oh, hi! I'm Tammy! What's your name?

McGuffin:

McGuffin. You gonna eat that roll?

TAMMY

No. Do you want it?

McGuffin grabs the croissant and swallows it quickly.

Oh my! You must be starving. You wanna have

dinner with me?

He sits at her table. McGuffin begins to eat furiously.

You should have a little class, Mac, like me.

MCGUFFIN

[Mouth full.]

Wine.

TAMMY

I'm not whining.

MCGUFFIN

No. Pour the wine.

TAMMY

Oh! I like the way you take charge. Allow me to properly introvert myself. I'm Tammy Cash, recent winner of the West Virginia Lottery.

MCGUFFIN

How much did you win?

TAMMY

Sixty-five million dollars.

MCGUFFIN

[Shaking her hand.]

Pleased to meet you.

TAMMY

Everybody is.

MCGUFFIN

[With another croissant.]

Got any creamery butter?

TAMMY

Oh, I forgot the butter!

[Going to a male guest's table.]

Can a get a pat from you?

MALE GUEST

[An audience member.]

Not right now. I'm with my wife.

TAMMY

Oh, you men! Get your mind out of the gutter!

[To a female guest's table.]

Can a get a pat from you?

FEMALE GUEST

[An audience member.]

Not right now. I'm with my husband.

TAMMY

Don't go there, girlfriend!

[Returning to her own table.]

I couldn't get any butter.

MCGUFFIN

Bologna.

TAMMY

Honest! I tried.

MCGUFFIN

No, I mean, you got any bologna?

BRICK

[Enter.]

Hey, beast, get away from the beauty.

MCGUFFIN

I'm a guest, dick.

BRICK

That's Brick! Elliot Brick! One of Wheeling's Top Five Private Eyes.

MCGUFFIN

Wheeling only has five private eyes.

TAMMY

Oh, are we in danger?

MCGUFFIN

You're in danger if Elliot Brick, private dick is on the case.

BRICK

No danger, ma'am. I'm just here for... security.
Detective Rule # 3: When it comes to rich peoples'
artifacts, you can't be too careful. Or charge too
much.

[To McGuffin.]

You better beat it, curtain jockey, before Mrs.
Shepherd-Boggs-Zane sees you fraternizing with the
guests.

MCGUFFIN

I told you, dork-tective, I'm a special guest. I'm here
because I found the symphony.

BRICK

There's something fishy about you, McGuffin.

MCGUFFIN

Of course there is. I just had lunch at Coleman's.

BRICK

I'm going to keep my eye on you.

MCGUFFIN

Keep your eyes to yourself, Bruce.

BRICK

That's Brick!

They are eye-to-eye.

MCGUFFIN

How the hell did you get such a big case?

BRICK

That sounds like a cue for a flashback.

***SFX: Music - "Harlem Nocturne" (fades
under)***

*Shepherd-Boggs-Zane enters. McGuffin and
Tammy exit.*

[Aside.]

It was a rainy day that sunny night and I was just

about to leave my office when she walked into my life.

SHEPHERD-BOGGS-ZANE

Is this the office of Elliot Brick, Private Detective?

BRICK

Who wants to know?

SHEPHERD-BOGGS-ZANE

I am Tallulah Shepherd-Boggs-Zane from Wheeling Symphony Auxiliary.

BRICK

Elliot Brick, one of Wheeling's Top Six Private Detectives, at your service.

SHEPHERD-BOGGS-ZANE

I thought Wheeling only had five Private Detectives.

BRICK

I'm so Private, I haven't been detected yet. I'm the man who cracked the Case of the Marsh Wheeling Maltese Stogie. What can I do for you?

SHEPHERD-BOGGS-ZANE

Mr. Brick, I need your expertise in security for a very delicate affair.

BRICK

[Aside.]

That's the way I like my affairs: Delicate, curvy and blond. I thought maybe she could show me why Wheeling is called the "Friendly City."

SHEPHERD-BOGGS-ZANE

I'm over here, Mr. Brick.

BRICK

Oh, yes, so what's the affair, Toots?

SHEPHERD-BOGGS-ZANE

That's Tallulah. But you may call me Mrs. Shepherd-Boggs-Zane. I'd like to hire you for discreet security at a society party for the Wheeling Symphony Auxiliary.

BRICK

[Aside.]

Guarding a gala wasn't as good as guarding a gal,
but I was game.

SHEPHERD-BOGGS-ZANE

Mr. Brick, who are you talking to?

BRICK

Oh yes, sorry, sweetheart. *[Swaggering.]* So, you
needed an expert and naturally, you decided to see
me, eh?

SHEPHERD-BOGGS-ZANE

Actually, the detective down the hall was at lunch, so
I thought I would try you.

BRICK

I get more jobs that way... So, what's this little soiree
all about, and why would you need security at some
hoity toity hullabaloo-za?

SHEPHERD-BOGGS-ZANE

Mr. Brick - How much do you know about the
symphony?

BRICK

Oh, I've been to a few "Music Under the Bars."

SHEPHERD-BOGGS-ZANE

That's "Music Under the Stars."

BRICK

Not for me. There's something about John Phillip
Sousa that just makes me want to drink.

SHEPHERD-BOGGS-ZANE

Now, everything I tell you is in the strictest
confidence – is that right, Mr. Brick?

BRICK

Absolutely. Cross my heart and hope to fry.

SHEPHERD-BOGGS-ZANE

Well, this is all very hush-hush, but our symphony
has been blessed with an astounding gift! One of our
employees recently returned from Austria where he

discovered a long-lost jewel from the genius who practically invented classical music!

BRICK

A German genius inventor? Sort of a mad scientist guy?

SHEPHERD-BOGGS-ZANE

No. A musical genius. He discovered sheet music hand-written by Ludwig Van Beethoven!

BRICK

Oh, yeah. The deaf guy.

SHEPHERD-BOGGS-ZANE

What?

[Pause.]

Mr. Brick, he came across Beethoven's final work – the Tenth Symphony! How do you top "The Ode to Joy?" Especially considering that when he wrote his Ninth Symphony, he was already deaf. By the time he wrote his Tenth, he was blind, toothless and senile. But that didn't stop him from working.

BRICK

It doesn't stop Congress, either.

SHEPHERD-BOGGS-ZANE

Naturally, we want to make the most of this opportunity. We are going to announce the discovery at a big donor party.

BRICK

And you need a little muscle at the shindig.

SHEPHERD-BOGGS-ZANE

Normally, we would not. But we need private security because, at the party, the actual sheet music in Beethoven's hand will be on display.

BRICK

You're going to show off the dead guy's hand? That's kind of gruesome.

SHEPHERD-BOGGS-ZANE

Just the sheet music. It's a priceless artifact and we

intend to donate it to a museum after the ceremony.

BRICK

You're going to give it away?

SHEPHERD-BOGGS-ZANE

Mr. Brick, we want to use this unveiling ceremony as an opportunity to bring in a lot of community support. In other words – money!

BRICK

Why don't you just skip the party and sell the music on eBay?

SHEPHERD-BOGGS-ZANE

But we have reason to believe there are those who would try to steal the music – or even destroy it.

[Melodramatically.]

Evil people, Mr. Brick. People who hate the truth. People who hate music. People who hate croissants – which are on our menu that night.

BRICK

Who tipped you that someone was going to jack the notes?

SHEPHERD-BOGGS-ZANE

It was an anonymous tip.

BRICK

So, I gotta find a guy named Anonymous. The investigation starts right there for any good private detective.

SHEPHERD-BOGGS-ZANE

Yes, Mr. Brick, but I'm hiring you anyway.

BRICK

[Aside.]

I decided to take the case. I didn't have anything to do the night of the party, anyway.

Beerstein enters, carrying his baton.

BEERSTEIN

Excuse me, Mrs. Shepherd-Boggs-Zane, but I think

it is time for the ceremony.

SHEPHERD-BOGGS-ZANE

Not now, Mr. Beerstein. I'm in a flashback.

BRICK

That's all right. The flashback is over. So, who is the rooster in the monkey suit?

[Eying Beerstein suspiciously.]

Don't I know you from somewhere? Maybe a monster truck rally?

SHEPHERD-BOGGS-ZANE

Ahem! Mr. Brick, would you please go do what you are supposed to do?

BRICK

You're trying to get rid of me, right? Well, lots of people have tried to get rid of me. Like Louis the Limp. And Tony Two-Toes. And the evilest one of all, The Wombat!

BEERSTEIN

This man is getting on my nerves.

SHEPHERD-BOGGS-ZANE

Mr. Brick, please. Retrieve the sheet music at once.

BRICK

[Aside]

That dame was brassier than the plumbing in a bordello.

SHEPHERD-BOGGS-ZANE

Quit narrating.

[She gestures dramatically offstage.]

Get the music!

Brick exits.

I'm sorry. The hired help can heap havoc upon harmonious happenings.

BEERSTEIN

Now he's got you alliterating!

Tammy enters as Shepherd-Boggs-Zane speaks to the entire room.

SHEPHERD-BOGGS-ZANE
Ladies and gentlemen...

[To Tammy.]
Others...

[Broadly.]
Tonight, you are in for a rare treat.

TAMMY
Oh, I'm on pins and eagles! What is it?

SHEPHERD-BOGGS-ZANE
Please! I'm trying to build some suspense, here!

TAMMY
Oh, sure! She's working the room! I seen this before.
You're good, honey! You're doing fine. Go on, go on.

SHEPHERD-BOGGS-ZANE
Ladies and gentlemen... *Not* others... I was just
about to tell you...

[Breaking down, to Beerstein.]
I can't! You see? The mood is broken!

BEERSTEIN
But, Mrs. Shepherd-Boggs-Zane. We are
approaching the moment for which we have all been
waiting! The unveiling!

SHEPHERD-BOGGS-ZANE
All right, all right.

[With a pointed eye on Tammy.]
Ladies and gentlemen. As I was just saying...

[Glancing back at Tommy.]
On this historic occasion, we are about to be
privileged to view publicly, for the first time ever...

TAMMY
[Hooting.]

You go girl!

Shepherd-Boggs-Zane cries out and lunges at Tammy, but Beerstein intervenes.

BEERSTEIN

Mrs. Shepherd-Boggs-Zane! Please!

SHEPHERD-BOGGS-ZANE

[Breathing heavily.]

This is impossible!

BEERSTEIN

Please, do it... for the symphony.

SHEPHERD-BOGGS-ZANE

[Taking a deep breath.]

For the symphony...

TAMMY

Oh, the suspension is building!

SHEPHERD-BOGGS-ZANE

For nearly 200 years, the last great work of Ludwig van Beethoven has been missing... This evening, this invited audience will witness the unveiling of this cherished treasure...

TAMMY

Oh, I love a treasure hunt!

SHEPHERD-BOGGS-ZANE

I would like to introduce Mr. McGuffin of the Capitol Theatre with a warm round of applause.

McGuffin enters as Shepherd-Boggs-Zane leads the applause.

A short time ago, Mr. McGuffin found the long-lost artifact in the last home of Beethoven. It was in a magazine rack adjacent to the maestro's toilet.

TAMMY

Oh, he was probably working on his final movement!

SHEPHERD-BOGGS-ZANE

[Trying to ignore Tammy.]

I would like to thank and recognize Mr. McGuffin who, after 33 years of working for stagehand's union wages, found a priceless treasure and, stupidly – er, gallantly – brought it to the attention of the Wheeling Symphony.

MCGUFFIN

Don't applaud. Just throw money.

TAMMY

If you had a pole, I could show you how to get money from them.

SHEPHERD-BOGGS-ZANE

Oh, please, Mr. McGuffin! Don't spoil this occasion with talk of money!

TAMMY

Wow. She's sure whistling another tune all of a sudden, ain't she?

SHEPHERD-BOGGS-ZANE

It is indeed fortunate that at this momentous occasion, we are privileged to have with us one of the world's leading conductors, here to conduct a small portion one of Beethoven's greatest works – ladies and gentlemen – Mr. Leonard Beerstein!

She leads applause.

BEERSTEIN

And now, I'd like to present, the Auxiliary Sextet.

TAMMY

I didn't know it was going to be that kind of party! I would have brought my vibrato!

SHEPHERD-BOGGS-ZANE

Please, Ms. Cash. I beg you – refrain.

TAMMY

Oh, sure. I don't want to fugue it up.