

TVE DRAMA 2004

## "PIANO PIANISSIMO"

### SYNOPSIS

Sonia, a 9-year-old girl, wants to be a pianist – the best concert pianist in the world – but for that she needs a piano.

María, a woman who is getting on in years, runs a shop selling and renting pianos and other instruments.

Every evening, Sonia goes along to the shop and, with the María's unspoken consent, plays the piano. A privilege? Not exactly. She has to share the practice with three children more in a small room.

A children music festival is announced. Sonia enrolls the group.

María loses her job running the shop when the owner decides to give his business a younger appeal. María is left with no job and Sonia and the other children with no music classes.

Sonia cannot resign herself to losing her piano lessons and she is concerned at María being unemployed.

They try to tackle the shop owner, but he is no easy customer to deal with.

In the end, with the concert drawing near, Sonia has an idea: they will make their own instruments! They need a consultant – María – and a little help from the local people.

Sonia and her "junk band" are a great success in the street festival. What is more, the shop owner has spotted on the amazing wind instrument, perhaps they could reach a good deal.

### 1. AFTER SCHOOL. EXT. DAY

It's five o'clock in the afternoon. The bell signalling the end of the school day rings, and with it a dizzying piano piece starts up.

Sonia rushes out, overtaking all her schoolmates.

She flies around a corner and goes down some steps, leaping down them two at a time at first, and then one by one.

The music follows the visual choreography.

She darts in and out among the people as she goes along a narrow street.

### 2. MUSIC SHOP.INT. DAY

She goes into the music shop, which is run by María, who is getting on for sixty years of age but who still looks energetic and full of life. She is polishing a tuba.

*¡Hello María!*

*¡Hello Sonia!*

Sonia goes right through the shop to a room at the back. She sits down at an upright piano, opens the lid and plays the last phrase of the background music being played in the soundtrack.

### 3. TITLE: PIANO PIANISSIMO

### 4. MUSIC SHOP.INT DAY

The other three arrive: Flip, Pol and Marc.

María takes instruments in cases out of a cupboard: the shop rents out used instruments, and she always has to make a selection from what's left. Some are not in very good condition.

Flip sets up a tuba, Pol tunes up a cello, and Beth gets the xylophone ready.

Each one plays his or her instrument, each with different sheet music to play. It is a miracle that they manage to concentrate on what they are doing.

María takes advantage of a quiet moment in the shop to go to the room and sets a kitchen alarm clock: five minutes each! Pol starts with his cello practice. The boys impatiently await their turn.

Finally Sonia's turn comes. . After a while she stops playing.

Taking advantage of Sonia's absentmindedness, Flip starts playing his tuba again, and then Pol, and Beth. Musical chaos again.

Maria deals quickly with a customer and goes back into the room.

#### 5. STREET. EXTERIOR. EVENING

On her way back home, Sonia comes across a man putting up posters announcing the children's concert in the town's festivities.

There is a box to enrol in the festival. Sonia hesitates: they are not advanced enough in their studies for that.

A few moments later Sonia goes straight to the table and enrolls herself and the children as a "Baroque quartet" .

Standing beside the poster again, Sonia looks around and tears it down. Part of it remains glued to the wall.

#### 6. MUSIC SHOP. INT. NIGHT

In the music shop, María opens a letter and reads it with a worried look.

The till is open. She is about to close it when her attention focuses on the bank notes inside: there are just a few.

She pulls out a wad of notes and begins to work with her calculator.

She crosses things out here and there, and makes notes, but there's no way: it just doesn't add up. At this moment, the shop owner shows up by the street door with an impatient look. He goes straight to the till, takes the bank notes with a gesture as if to say: "Is this all?". María looks tense.

#### 7. SONIA'S ROOM. INT. NIGHT

Sonia is in bed. She turns her torch on the concert poster, which she has put up on the wall in her bedroom.

The beam of light runs over the bandstand on which the concert will be staged, and then over the date...(7 days left)

#### MUSIC SHOP. INT. NIGHT

Maria gets up, looks worriedly at the area where the children do their music practice, and turns out the light.

#### 8. MUSIC SHOP.INT. DAY.

Sonia is showing the poster to her friends when Pol unrolls an identical poster at the very moment when Maria does the same thing as she comes through the curtain. They all burst out laughing.

Maria proposes a piece that she thinks would go very well for the quartet; they all nod in agreement and get down to studying the piece. But the job is not as easy as it seems.

María decides to go over and bring some order and harmony to the quartet.

She sets up a metronome for them – a very special one with a little orchestra conductor hanging onto the arm that marks the beat.

They have a good time practising the piece, with María conducting.

When the class is over, they all go off home, and Sonia gives María a kiss.

#### 9. SQUARE. EXTERIOR DAY

Sonia goes across a zebra crossing, playing at jumping around on the white lines as if they were giant keys, and notes resound in her head.

Her little concert becomes a huge concert of car horns blaring as the drivers sit waiting at that zebra crossing.

#### 10. THE MUSIC SHOP

The owner of the music shop comes in and asks María for the accounts.

When he sees the cash register and counts the bank notes, he gestures to María as if to say that things cannot go on like that.

María speaks in her defence, opens up a piano and says that it's very old and can no longer be tuned properly.

She says the instruments are all old and nobody rents them out...

They stay arguing when they notice that there is someone else in the shop.

A man with his little daughter complains about a useless violin. The owner changes the damaged instrument for another almost new one, and gives a lollipop to the child.

When they leave, the owner notices Maria staring him.

#### 11. SONIA'S ROOM. INTERIOR. NIGHT

Sonia stretches a strip of paper over her desk.

She draws a piano keyboard on it.

She puts up the sheet music and carries on with her practising.

The music seems to be in her head.

Her fingers thud dully on the paper. From time to time she stops to repeat a phrase.

Stuck on the wall beside her toy piano is a magazine cutting advertising a keyboard and giving the price; the shop is called 2010 MUSICA  
Only a few coins in the money box. The piano is far, very far away.

## 12. THE STREET OUTSIDE THE MUSIC SHOP.EXT. DAY

Sonia is walking along near the music shop when something catches her eye. The shop is full of workmen measuring things and unpacking huge packages, while others are putting wind instruments up on a shelf.

Sonia cannot make any sense of it. She goes in and asks after María.

They all shrug; one pass alongside her carrying a ladder

**Watch out my dear, don't get in the way!**

Sonia sees María's metronome, the one with the little conductor on it: she picks it up and hides it.

Then the shop owner turns up, giving instructions to some young men carrying a large package. He stands looking at Sonia going out of the shop.

A moment later, Beth, Flip and Pol arrive and stand looking into the changing shop, astonished.

On her way home, Sonia finds María sitting on a bench, holding a bag with the personal possessions she had been keeping in the shop. Sonia sits down beside her.

Sonia realises what has happened and feels very sorry at her friend's situation; she rummages around in her backpack and gives María her metronome.

María smiles gratefully.

## 13. THE STREET OUTSIDE THE MUSIC SHOP. EXTERIOR. DAY

The next day, Sonia goes along to the new music shop. There is a new sign in the window saying 2010 MUSICA.

Sonia looks inside.

It looks empty, but there is a spectacular grand piano sitting in the middle.

She goes in and sits down at the piano.

. Ceremoniously, she lowers her hands down towards the keys and, without touching them at all, she plays in her imagination.

She gets up and caresses the edge of the grand piano.

She looks inside it and plucks a string, which makes a deep sound.

The shop owner comes out and angrily tells her to clear off. **"Hey you!"**

Startled and alarmed, Sonia rushes out of the shop, knocking over some cymbals on the way.

She mumbles an apology and runs out.

But she comes back for a moment, stares at the owner and then goes away.

#### 14. THE MUSIC SHOP. EXTERIOR /INTERIOR. DAY

Sonia meets up with her friends, and they decide to go along to the shop to negotiate with the new owner, since they are not happy about losing their music classes. She takes Pol, the biggest, as a bodyguard.

They all look to Sonia to take the lead.

Sonia unrolls the poster announcing the concert.

The shopkeeper listens to them, and then goes over to a cello and turns the price tag to face them: 800 euros. He then does the same with the tuba, 1000 euros and the piano, 8,000. Pol leaves, almost dragging Sonia as they go since she looks as if she won't give up.

#### 15. MUSIC SHOP.INT. DAY

Shortly after, as the shopkeeper is turning the pages of a book on rare instruments, he hears a terrible din outside.

Out in the street, Sonia and the others are all banging saucepans. They are asking for their music classes to be continued and for María to be brought back.

The man steps outside to chase them away, but the children will not budge.

He goes back into the shop, and makes a telephone call.

María arrives: she is a little flustered by it all, but deep down she is proud to see the children protesting.

It all ends with hot chocolate drinks for all out on the porch in María's house.

#### 16. THE PATIO IN MARIA'S HOUSE. EXTERIOR. DAY.

María is playing, lining up sponge fingers and chocolates to make a keyboard, and 'plays' along with a Dixieland piano solo, in playback-style and very theatrically: everyone laughs.

A double bass? Pol stretches out a clothes line and imitates the gestures of a jazz bass player.

Beth makes a great drum solo with glasses and jars, beating straws on them.

Flip avails himself of a funnel to imitate a soaring Dixieland trumpet solo. They all laugh.

But Sonia has just had a bright idea... On a shelf, beside the firewood, there are some remains of old instruments. Sonia holds a broken cello neck.

#### 17. THE LOFT IN MARIA'S HOUSE. INTERIOR. DAY

María, Sonia and Flip are up in the loft, rooting around amongst remains of old instruments.

There are cello necks with cobwebs, and bits of old wind instruments.

There are also a few old melodicas that really inspire Sonia.

#### 18. NEIGHBOURHOOD WORKSHOP. INTERIOR. DAY

Sonia and Beth are hauling copper pipes and other objects along in a cart. They persuade the neighbours to help out: an old electrician welds some copper tubes together with a gas welder; a locksmith cuts up an iron radiator with a circular saw, sending sparks flying.

#### 19. THE SQUARE. EXTERIOR. DAY

After a performance by child violinists, our "junk band" appears. Everyone looks perplexed at the sight of their weird instruments. Sonia is pushing a Harmonium made out of two camping bellows, gas pipes and two melodicas – a low-pitched one and a higher one. Flip is coiling up a never-ending tuba made out of plumbing fittings, and Beth sets up her percussion using a marimba made out of a chopped-up radiator and an array of percussive odds and ends. Last comes Pol the cellist, with his supercello made out of a giant ham tin. They launch into the baroque quartet they had been practising, but with those instruments it is all but unrecognisable. The boys freeze up and look at Sonia. Murmuring starts among the audience. Sonia and her friends are becoming more and more agitated. Suddenly, Maria starts applauding, the people around join her. Sonia look at Flip and says: "One, two, three..." Flip launches into a bass rhythm with his far-out tuba, and they all start joining in. Sonia plays a few chords and a repetitive melody that's warm and catching. T. Sonia is exultant: the junk band is the hit of the day.

María, who is there in the audience, is applauding enthusiastically. A man goes over to Flip, with the intention of buying his plumbing tuba – that eccentric, never-ending instrument. The man turns out to be the owner of the music shop, and he offers Flip some money, but Flip, taking his cue from Sonia's gestures, refuses the bank notes. The man adds three more notes. Flip still says no. Eventually Sonia intervenes in the transaction and whispers something to the man, pointing at María. The shopkeeper feels cornered, but he wants that instrument to hang up in his shop window as an advertising ploy. He finally shakes Sonia's hand.

#### 20. THE ENTRANCE TO MARIA'S HOUSE. EXT. DAY.

There is a new sign up at María's house: MUSIC SCHOOL. A row of children, some with instruments, are going up the porch steps.

Inside the new music school, María signs an agreement with the shop owner on the shining surface of a new piano. They shake the hands.

Nex to them Sonia, Beth, Flip and Pol take their instruments and launch into a gypsy theme.

Sonia: **"One, two, three, and..."**

CREDITS