

CINEMETROPOLIS

Written by

Andrew Sherwood

(732) 614-9762  
andrew-sherwood.com  
andrew.sherwood200@gmail.com

EXT. CINEMETROPOLIS - OUTDOOR CAFE - DAY

A hand picks up a black laptop bag from under a table. A MAN stands up, wearing a corduroy sports jacket and aviator sunglasses. Out MAIN TITLE MUSIC rumbles.

ON THE CORNER - POLICE DETECTIVE

DANTE EGG, a film noir gumshoe over easy, watches the man.

INSERT - POLICE BULLETIN IN EGG'S HANDS

The man, ANDREW SHERWOOD, cowers in a spartan apartment, lit only by a single flashlight. He's wanted for MURDER!

ANDREW SHERWOOD

Spots the detective and takes off. Egg sprints after him. The MUSIC EXPLODES with energy.

EXT. WIDE - TRAFFIC INTERSECTION - DAY

SUPER: "CINEMETROPOLIS," running the length of the crosswalk, blocking dozens of HONKING CARS. The detective dashes after Andrew across the street.

INT. SPOOKY HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Andrew jogs past us through a dark, unlit house. Egg pursues him, looking around warily. A DARK FIGURE looms behind him. Egg YELPS as SUPER: "STARRING EMILY BROWN" appears.

EXT. OLD WEST - GRASSY PLAIN - DAY

Egg stumbles toward us, out of breath. He freezes- grabs his holster. A Mexican standoff ensues between Egg, Andrew, and SUPER: "GEOFF PICTOR." Suddenly, Andrew points- Egg draws- and FIRES at the letters, which fall over. Andrew runs off.

EXT. NARROW ALLEY - DAY

Andrew runs by us, kicking over trashcans and boxes. SUPER: "AND INTRODUCING ITHACA NEW YORK AS CINEMETROPOLIS," completely blocking the detective.

EXT. MED. SHOT - PRIVATE HIGH SCHOOL - SCHOOL BUS - DAY

Andrew dives onto the bus. The doors close.

WIDE - DETECTIVE EGG

Stares out over a sea of school buses. SUPER: "DIRECTED BY ANDREW SHERWOOD." The MUSIC CLANGS to a conclusion over:

EXT. PRIVATE HIGH SCHOOL - FRONT SIGN - DAY

"Miss Trunchbull's Very Private School for Girls."

EXT. MISS TRUNCHBULL'S - FRONT DOOR - DAY

A BELL RINGS. The door flies open- a GAGGLE of five girls, 17-18, struts out side, singing animatedly.

GIRL 1

"I went back there again, and  
My nails still aren't right.  
And- Lizzie what's wrong?  
Have a date for tonight?"

GIRL 2

"It's Larry. He's covered in acne  
and not very tall."

GIRL 1

"Better it's Larry than no one at  
all."

They continue past us, revealing MELISMA ARPEGGIO, 17, tailgating them, and covering her face with her hair. She turns a corner under a poster for the "4th Annual Last Chance Dance- Be There! Or Be Alone Forever!"

Melisma glances over her shoulder and nearly walks into a tall jock, MITCH, 18. He strikes a pose against the wall and grins at her. A MUSICAL INTRO winds up. He sings:

MITCH

"I am the very model of a  
Senior starting quarterback,  
And did you know that I can  
Run a mile in two minutes flat?"

Melisma rolls her eyes and hurries around him.

MITCH

Hey, Melisma! Hey! Does the name  
"Mitch Reelfast" mean anything to  
you?

She ducks around behind the buses. Mitch jogs after her.

EXT. QUIET SIDEWALK - DAY

Four-storey warehouses look down on a traffic-less street. Mitch wanders up the sidewalk, scanning his surroundings. He spots someone up ahead, climbing into one of a trio of trashcans.

It is SORDINO, 17-18, dressed in dark, patched pants, a felt cap and a vest. Mitch stalks up behind him.

MITCH

Hey. Hey! Hey, man- I'm looking for-  
You seen a girl around here?

Sordino blanches upon seeing Mitch. He glances from the trashcans to the corner and back. Mitch grabs his arm and pulls him away.

MITCH

I said, you seen a girl around  
here, man? No?

Sordino vigorously shakes his head. He inches toward trashcans but can't break free. When Mitch releases him, he scurries back two steps. A beat.

MITCH

Yo, don't be such a wimp, man.

He walks up the way he came, shaking his head. Sordino scampers toward the trashcans, but freezes when someone comes around the corner. It's Melisma. He plasters himself to the side of a building. She sings.

MELISMA

"Some-where, under the subway,  
Where bums lie,  
There's a man that I've heard of,  
Once in a lullaby."

Sordino stares and swallows. Melisma doesn't see him as she skips into the street, gazing down at a manhole. She dances around it.

MELISMA

"Some-day I'll go down in the murk.  
Down where the Author does his  
work.  
I'll ask him--"

She spins away from the manhole, looking up at the sky.

MELISMA

"If there's any inkling chance  
I'll meet a boy who doesn't dance,  
Or sing or prance or harmonize.  
I can't stand all those prying eyes  
That must impress--"

She spots Sordino. Staring at her. He doesn't move. For several beats. Suddenly- he's off in a flash, up the street and out of sight.

INTERTITLE: Our Hero, Sordino!

EXT. SEEDY STREET - CONTINUOUS

Sordino runs headlong into someone and falls over backward- it's Andrew Sherwood.

ANDREW SHERWOOD

Sordino? What are you doing-

Sordino tries to get past him, but Andrew makes a grab- catches his ankle. They struggle.

EXT. QUIET SIDEWALK - CONTINUOUS

Melisma stares up the street at the corner. Something flies out from behind it, landing in the street. She picks it up: it's a shoe- Sordino's. She looks at the corner.

EXT. SEEDY STREET - CONTINUOUS

Andrew and Sordino scamper out of sight in opposite directions as Melisma comes around the corner.

INTERTITLE: The Silent District of Cinemetropolis.

EXT. SILENT DISTRICT - SEEDY STREET - B&W - DAY

Melisma gapes at the sight. Crumpled papers and trash cans have piled up on the sidewalk. QUIANT ORCHESTRAL MUSIC follows the action. There is no DIAGETIC SOUND.

Melisma skulks up the street, scanning the strange buildings. Up the street she spots an UPPER CLASS TWIT, bearded, dark suit and carrying a cane. She hurries over.

MELISMA

"Excuse me sir, do you know  
Where I can find-  
I mean, this isn't mine,  
And I'm not from around here!"

The Upper Class Twit's eyes widen. He explodes at her.

UCT INTERTITLE

Quiet, missy!

Melisma steps away from him and he waddles off. She trips over the curb, the MUSIC STUMBLES with her. As she regains her balance, she spots a large cardboard box nearby on the sidewalk.

There's something scribbled on the side: "Sordino's Box! Keep Out!" There's a small flap cut out as well.

ANGLE- BOTTOM OF THE BOX

Two feet stick out from underneath. One black shoe- and one bare foot- its toes curl.

Melisma walks over and knocks on the top of the box. A beat. The flap pops open, and two eyes peer out. Suddenly, the box lifts up and scurries away, accompanied by PIZZICATO STRINGS. It settles down a few feet away.

Undeterred, Melisma follows the box. She crouches next to the eye flap.

MELISMA

"Hello in there.  
I thought you'd care:  
I've got something for you.  
It's your shoe."

Melisma leaves the shoe and turns away. She glances back after a few steps, just in time to see the box lift up and gobble up the shoe. Melisma smiles.

She walks off, and freezes suddenly. Mitch peers around the street from the corner. He hasn't seen her. Yet.

MITCH

Hey, Melisma! C'mon, Melly-baby,  
where are you? This isn't funny!  
(MORE)

MITCH (CONT'D)

You've gotta get pretty for the  
dance tonight!

He starts down the street, toward her. Melisma hastily crouches down behind a trashcan. Mitch is only a few feet away. If he turns around, he'll-

Her YELP is muffled as the cardboard box suddenly comes down on top of her.

Mitch spins around. He looks at the box. The box looks back at him. After a long beat, he shakes his head and walks away.

MITCH

Melisma! Meliisma!

INT. SORDINO'S BOX - THROUGH THE EYE FLAP - DAY

Mitch continues in this vein as he wanders up the street.

ON SORDINO AND MELISMA

The two of them are contorted inside the box. Legs are folded, arms are snaked wherever they fit. Sordino smiles at her as he shifts to a more comfortable position. She smiles back and makes room for him.

SORDINO INTERTITLE

So you're Melisma?

She nods. They smile at each other. A beat.

SORDINO INTERTITLE

I'm Sordino.

She smiles. Again.

MELISMA

"Sor-di-no..."

ANGLE - THROUGH EYE FLAP

Mitch clutches his head, dodging blows from the Upper class Twit's cane. He stumbles back up the street.

MITCH

Okay! Okay! Quit it, man! I get the  
point!

The Upper Class Twit takes another swing at him.

UCT INTERTITLE

I've had it with you kids these  
days! All sound and no substance!

The Upper Class Twit chase him OUT OF FRAME.

EXT. SEEDY STREET - SORDINO'S BOX - DAY

The box topples off of Melisma and Sordino. She stands up,  
and pulls him to his feet.

MELISMA

"I think they're gone..."

Sordino's eyes widen. He shakes his head as the UCT taps her  
shoulder with his cane. He erupts in a silent tirade, and  
jabs Sordino as well for good measure.

UCT INTERTITLE

(Censored for your protection by  
the Hays Production Code.)

His point, made, the UCT marches off. Melisma and Sordino  
glare at him.

Sordino sticks out his tongue. A smirk crosses his face. He  
glances at her. She raises an eyebrow. He pulls a banana peel  
out of his vest and carefully tosses it on the sidewalk. She  
catches on quickly.

MELISMA

"Oh, sir! Pardon me! Men like you  
are so few,  
I just wanted to know why you have  
three legs, not two!"

The UCT freezes. He rounds on them, stomping back the way he  
came. He raises the cane- and slips on the peel.

EXT. SEEDY ALLEYWAY - DAY

Melisma and Sordino scurry around the corner, still chortling-  
we can only HEAR her. A beat. The STRINGS SWELL.

MELISMA

"What is this strange new  
sensation?  
It's like riding a comet!  
I can't help how I feel...  
I think I'm going to vomit!"

Her face contorts with pain and she staggers into the wall. Sordino gapes, helpless. Her feet and legs twitch. He edges closer. Melisma suddenly grabs his collar and stares into his eyes.

MELISMA

"Sordino! Help me! This isn't a  
joke!  
I need music to dance to!  
It's my only hope!"

She grimaces, and her legs kick violently. Sordino keeps her falling, and helps her out onto:

EXT. A DIFFERENT STREET - DAY

Sordino and Melisma stagger out of the alley and glance around. A beat. Sordino's face brightens at the sight of:

SPEAKEASY SIGN: "Judge Abstinence Q. Teetotaler's Speakeasy:  
Fine 'Punch' and 'Tea'- Live Music!"

They stumble across the street to the door, guarded by a cigar-chewing ZOOT SUIT.

EXT. SPEAKEASY - CONTINUOUS

Melisma's feet kick again. The Zoot Suit raises an eyebrow at them.

ZOOT SUIT INTERTITLE

Password?

A beat. Sordino freezes. He forces a smile at the Zoot Suit. He mimes thrusting with a dagger, and a fish breathing through gills.

SORDINO INTERTITLE

Swordfish?

The Zoot Suit reaches for a bulge under his jacket. Sordino doesn't need telling twice. He leads Melisma away, to the edge of another alley. We can hear a faint DRUM KIT in the distance. Melisma's feet begin tapping in time with the music. Sordino quickly helps her walk:

EXT. BEHIND THE SPEAKEASY - DAY

Sordino and Melisma hobble to the end of the alley. The MUSIC is much louder here. Melisma is already starting to get into the groove.

ANGLE - AIR VENT.

On the side of the building. We can clearly hear the BAND inside jam out a fast SWING NUMBER.

Melisma grins at Sordino, grabbing him and dancing along to the music. Sordino hesitates, barely keeping up. Melisma smiles and locks her eyes with his. Sordino loosens up, dancing the Charleston with her.

The MUSIC CLIMAXES and swings to a finish. Sordino and Melisma stop dancing, but don't let go of each other. They smile, eyes locked. A beat.

MELISMA

"I know that I'm weird. You must think I'm a head case. But I need to dance, wherever the place."

She looks away. A beat. They're nose to nose. He smiles. Leans closer. The STRINGS SWELL again.

Melisma's eyes widen and she recoils. The VIOLINS STUMBLE out of their dive into a throbbing melody. Melisma backs away from Sordino, gaping at him.

MELISMA

"I... I can't believe this! What you're trying to do! You want me to fall in love with you!"

Sordino steps closer, grabs her hand. His mouth gapes- he can't find the right word. She pulls away from him.

MELISMA

"Just quit it right now. All your tricks are so sappy! You think that I need a man to be happy?"

She shoves him aside and storms up the alley.

EXT. SEEDY STREET - B&W/COLOR - DAY

Melisma hurries past us, still sniffing. Sordino chases after her, several paces behind. He's about to LEAVE FRAME when a hand grabs him suddenly.

SORDINO AND ANDREW SHERWOOD - COLOR

ANDREW SHERWOOD  
Andrew Sherwood, movie director.

Sordino struggles, but can't break free.

ANDREW SHERWOOD  
Sordino, buddy, this isn't what  
you're supposed to be doing, is it?

Sordino nods vigorously. He points after Melisma.

ANDREW SHERWOOD  
No, no, no, no, Dino, c'mon, be  
real. Girls like her- the only way  
you'll win her back is with a big  
romantic speech.

SORDINO AND ANDREW SHERWOOD - B&W/COLOR

Sordino escapes and steps into the color section, but Andrew  
grabs him again. They struggle.

ANDREW SHERWOOD  
What are you gonna do? Huh? Because  
if you think you're gonna 'find  
your voice' at the last minute- heh  
heh... even I wouldn't stoop to  
something like that.

Sordino stops struggling. He looks at Andrew, eyes watering.  
Andrew pats his shoulder.

ANDREW SHERWOOD  
If you really care about her, you  
should want her to be happy. And  
she'll be very happy- with Mitch. I  
will make sure of it myself.

He walks off. Sordino skulks on the edge of the color and  
B&W. The wind picks up. A paper flies into his face- it's a  
flier for the dance. Sordino's jaw clenches.

EXT. QUIET SIDEWALK - COLOR - DAY

Sordino rounds the corner, full of resolve.

EGG (O.S.)  
Excuse me, son?

Detective Egg appears in front of him.

EGG  
Detective Dante Egg, CMPD.

He flashes a badge.

EGG  
I'd- I'd just like to ask you a few  
very quick questions.

EXT. NEW MONEY - SHOP-LINED STREET - DAY

Melisma shuffles along the sidewalk, staring at the stormy sky. She stops, noticing something on the ground- a banana peel. She stares at it, eyes welling up again. Andrew Sherwood grabs her suddenly, steering her back up the street.

MELISMA  
"Excuse me! Buzz off!  
Just leave me alone!  
I'm in no mood for this!  
I have to get home!"

ANDREW SHERWOOD  
There's no time. We have to get you  
ready for the dance.

She stomps on his food, but only throws him off for a moment. He pushes her toward a stairwell in the sidewalk.

MELISMA  
"Get your hands off me,  
You monster! You beast!  
Let go of me now, or I will call  
the police!"

ANGLE - UP THE STAIRS

A TINNY RINGTONE goes off. Andrew Sherwood pulls a cell phone from his jacket. They start to descend.

ANDREW SHERWOOD  
Hold that thought. Talk to me.  
What? I don't care how hot it gets  
in Oahu. This is a frakking  
reindeer movie. I want snow. Hello?  
Hello? Rats.

INT. SOMEWHERE UNDER THE SUBWAY - DAY

Shafts of light illuminate only the eeriest details of a dark, spooky tunnel. A TRAIN RUMBLES by overhead.

Andrew Sherwood leads an increasingly reluctant Melisma through the murk.

MELISMA

Who are you? Where are we?  
I don't like this place...  
Are you the Author? I-

Andrew Sherwood chuckles and fixes his aviator sunglasses.

ANDREW SHERWOOD

Heh heh... Me? The Author... No,  
whatever gave you that idea?  
Grigr! Grigr, it's me!

There is a WHOOSH of CLOTH behind them. Melisma looks around and gasps. GRIGNR is a tall, skeletal man in black robes. He stares down at them, clutching a long staff.

ANDREW SHERWOOD

Hey, buddy! Great to see you again!  
Have you lost weight?

Grigr turns Melisma's head from side to side with the staff, examining her. He GRUNTS something unintelligible.

ANDREW SHERWOOD

We don't have a lot of time. I need  
'gorgeous' pronto.

Grigr takes a few measurements with the staff. A BOUNCY, 6/8 RHYTHM winds up. He swirls the staff and chants:

GRIGNR

"Sunatha-rug na mikluka-mug da  
bogoma bungoma wug!  
Put 'em together and what've you  
got?  
BOGOMA BUNGOMA WUG!"

Melisma SCREAMS.

EXT. QUIET SIDEWALK - CU - POLICE BULLETIN - DAY

EGG

Have you seen this man?

Sordino stares at the picture.

EGG

His name's Andrew Sherwood- he's some low-life college kid, but he's involved in the deaths of over a dozen fictional characters.

Sordino smirks. He holds up the flier.

EGG

Thanks, kid. This guy's dangerous- I've gotta find him before he hurts someone else.

EXT. SHOP-LINED STREET - STAIRWELL - DAY

Melisma SHRIEKS from inside.

INT. SOMEWHERE UNDER THE SUBWAY - DAY

Grignr crosses his arms and smiles. Melisma gapes at herself: her hair done up and topped with a tiara, her school uniform transformed into a prom dress and heels.

ANDREW SHERWOOD

Don't worry, you can thank him later. Let's go.

EXT. MISS TRUNCHBULL'S - NIGHT

A CROWD has gathered outside the front door. Everyone is dressed up. DANCE BEATS drift outside. Mitch stares out over the parking lot, standing on the curb by himself. Melisma fidgets as Andrew points him out to her.

ANDREW SHERWOOD

Okay, there's Mitch. You kids have fun.

He shoos her away. The Gaggle of Girls surround him.

ANDREW SHERWOOD

Well, he-lloo...

They all find a place on his arm. Melisma gapes at them as they go inside. She doesn't notice Mitch loop his arm around her.

MITCH

Hey, Melly-baby. Nice of you to get dolled up tonight.

He starts to steer them inside. Melisma pulls away.

MELISMA

"No, Mitch, I'm sorry. This just isn't right. I can't do it, I'm leaving. Good-bye and good night."

Mitch gapes at her, his ego bruised.

MITCH

Hey, I thought I was doing you a favor. Suit yourself.

He walks away and immediately picks up another DATE from the crowd. Melisma watches them go inside.

Gasping for air, Sordino stumbles across the parking lot and spots Melisma. He swallows, straightens his vest, and walks to her. She sees his shadow and whirls around.

Sordino looks at her, opens his mouth, and HONKS at her. He tries again, only managing a very passionate OINK. He swallows. She raises an eyebrow. A beat.

He slowly turns around. Steps out onto the parking lot. Melisma watches him. Sordino shoves his hands in his pockets and stares at his feet. He reaches the road and does not look back. He shuffles down the street as we:

FADE OUT:

SUPER: "DIRECTED BY ANDREW SHERWOOD." It scrolls up, but as it reaches the top of the screen:

MELISMA (V.O.)

Sor-di-no! ... Sor-di-no...

SMASH TO:

EXT. MISS TRUNCBULL'S - JUST UP THE STREET - NIGHT

Sordino turns to see Melisma behind him, smiling. She throws her arms around his neck and kisses him. The STRINGS SWELL as he kisses her back and they embrace in the moonlight. Sordino speaks.

SORDINO

I love you.

INT. MISS TRUNCBULL'S - GYMNASIUM - NIGHT

Sordino and Melisma, grinning blissfully, dance in the middle of the CROWD to a FAST SWING NUMBER.

ANGLE - MED. SHOT - ANDREW SHERWOOD AND HIS DATES

Watching from the side of the room.

GIRLS

Aww...

ANDREW SHERWOOD

Y'know, I think I like this ending  
a lot better.

A gun barrel is pushed into the side of his head.

EGG

All right, Sherwood, the jig is up!

Andrew Sherwood is still watching the dance.

EGG

Keep your hands where I can see  
them and step away from the  
festivities!

Andrew Sherwood glances at Egg, chuckling.

ANDREW SHERWOOD

Sorry, man, you're too late. It's  
the end of the movie.

BLACK

EGG (V.O.)

What?

Roll credits. For real this time.

FIN