

Coalhouse Walker Jr.

A proud and talented pianist. He is sophisticated, with a romantic demeanor and gentle heart though an intimidating build. he must convey strength, polish, and intelligence. However, internally, he also reflects the unbridled rage experienced by vast numbers of African Americans at the hands of an oft unjust society that was America in this era. Even so, he controls and channels this rage into a highly calculated, systematic approach to his own brand of justice. The actor who seeks to fill this role must exhibit polish, charisma, intelligence, and strength. African-American

Gender: Male Vocal Range: A4-G2

(SARAH nods a happy, tearful assent. The music changes into the vamp for "WHEELS OF A DREAM" as we find ourselves on an idyllic hillside in the country. COALHOUSE has been polishing his car. SARAH, amused at his fastidiousness, holds their son.)

SARAH

You've been polishing that car so hard
there ain't gonna be anything left for
us to ride home in!

COALHOUSE

You laugh but you wait, you'll see. This is no ordinary car,
Sarah. This car is going to take us to a better day and a better
time. Imagine that. Imagine what this child's life can be.

WHEELS OF A DREAM LYRICS

COALHOUSE

I see his face.
I hear his heartbeat.
I look in those eyes.
How wise they seem.
Well, when he is old enough
I will show him America
And he will ride
on the wheels of a dream.

We'll go down South,

SARAH
Go down South,

COALHOUSE
And see your people

SARAH
See my folks.

COALHOUSE
Won't they take to him

SARAH
They'll take to him

COALHOUSE
Like cats to cream!

SARAH
Mmm...

COALHOUSE
Then we'll travel on from there.

SARAH
California or who knows where!

BOTH
And we will ride
On the wheels of a dream.

COALHOUSE
Yes, the wheels are turning for us,
girl.
And the times are starting to roll.
Any man can get where he wants to
If he's got some fire in his soul.
We'll see justice, Sarah,
And plenty of men
Who will stand up
And give us our due.
Oh, Sarah, it's more than promises.
Sarah, it must be true.
A country that let's a man like me
Own a car, raise a child, build a life
with you...

With you...

SARAH
With you...

BOTH

Beyond that road,
Beyond this lifetime
That care full of hope
Will always gleam!
With the promise of happiness
And the freedom he'll live to know.
He'll travel with head held high,
Just as far as his heart can go
And he will ride-
Our son will ride-
On the wheels of a dream.