The Mystery of the Musical Requiem!

By Robert Aldace Wood

First read the mystery, then solve the crime!
The Mystery of the Musical Requiem!
I was glad they had sent for me. And yet rarely have I approached a case with the same feeling of regret and trepidation. Regret, because in the bizarre twin killing at Barkely Manor I had lost an old and dear friend in Lowell Barkely, the composer who, though partially paralyzed for years, had conquered the world through his music. Trepidation, because I loved the Barkely family, and I feared what I might find when I began to look for Lowell’s killer.

At Barkely Manor I entered as a professional where so many times before I’d entered as a friend.

“Oh, it’s Inspector Hammond!” Aunt Theda announced to the family. She squeezed my hand and whispered, “How good of you to come.”

They were all standing about the shattered library, where the smell of the gelignite bomb still hung heavy in the air. It was here in the library that Lowell’s wheelchair was kept so that he could greet guests comfortably. He couldn’t talk, but his eyes always showed a world of welcome, and his handclasp was as firm as ever. Now his broken body lay stretched out on the floor along with the body of Adelaide Cummins, the maid also killed in the explosion.

“I watched over him night and day... always... right here in this room!” sobbed Aunt Theda.

Lowell’s son, Bob Barkely, the gifted pianist, stood like a shipwrecked sailor adrift in a sea of despair. Miss Harper White, his father’s secretary and companion, went over to comfort him. Aunt Theda looked daggers at her.

It was then I noticed fidgeting in the shadows the stooped and awkward figure of Minot Peevey, the vinegary critic and columnist, a bitter enemy of Lowell Barkely.

“What are you doing here, Peevey?” I demanded.

His long, bent body unfolded like an umbrella.

“It’s a well-known fact that Barkely hadn’t long to live. I decided that it was time to make amends after all these years.”

“You hated my father!” Bob Barkely clenched his fist. “You’ve abused and criticized his music for twenty years. It was your bomb, and you couldn’t resist coming to see the results of your handiwork.”

“Unless you killed him for the inheritance,” Peevey snapped back.

“If Bob’s father were going to die soon anyway, why should Bob kill him now?” Miss White stood up for Bob with surprising conviction.

“If you ask me, you’re the guilty party, Harper White.” Aunt Theda’s
long finger split the smoke-filled air. "You were named executor of the will. You would have had control of the money until Bob turned twenty-five. You could have done quite a lot in that time."

Bob sighed. "Maybe it's pretty simple. Maybe Adelaide killed him and was blown up by her own bomb. She wasn't even mentioned in the will and she's been caring for Dad for years."

"I've been the one caring for Lowell. I'm his sister!" said Aunt Theda.

"That's enough!" I said. I looked around the library. Strewn over Lowell's handsome grand piano were remnants of paper and white rose petals.

"Rose petals?"

"For Bob's concert tonight," said Harper White. "Many people send congratulatory flowers, but Bob's favorite are white roses."

"And the paper?"

"What's left of a lifetime of work. All Lowell's music - gone."

"All except this," said Bob, handing me a music score he had folded in his pocket. "This is the last thing he ever wrote. Dad especially wanted me to have it for tonight's concert. He called it Requiem. Although Dad couldn't talk, he said so much in his music."

"Indeed he did," I said, glancing at the music. "Here he names his murderer!"

Who killed Lowell Barkely? What was the motive? How does Inspector Hammond know? Piece the puzzle together to learn the answers!

The message is hidden only in the treble clef - the line of notes marked (     ). Each eighth note (       ) equals a dot (•). Eighth notes joined (       ) equal two dots (••). Each quarter note (       ) equals a dash (-).

Disregard all other symbols.

Decoder Chart

| A •• | N •• |
| B ••• | O --- |
| C ••• | P ••• |
| D ••• | Q ••• |
| E • | R •• |
| F ••• | S •• |
| G ••• | T |
| H •••• | U •• |
| I •• | V ••• |
| J ••• | W • |
| K •• | X •• |
| L ••• | Y --- |
| M --- | Z ••• |