

AMEN CORNER

BY James Baldwin

(David is a brilliant young jazz musician. IN the following monologue, he decides to leave his home and reject his mother's goal for his future. He decides to go out into the world and become his own man.)

DAVID:

And if I listened – what would happen? What do you think would happen if I listened? You want me to stay here, getting older, getting sicker – hating you? You think I want to hate you, Mama? You think it don't tear me to pieces to have to lie to you all the time. Yes, because I been lying to you, Mama, for a long time now! I don't want to tell no more lies. I don't want to keep feeling so bad inside that I have to go running down them alleys you was talking about – the alley right outside this door! – to find something to help me hide – to hide – from what I'm feeling, Mama, I want to be a man. It's time you let me be a man. You got to let me go (A pause) If I stayed here – I'd end up worse than Daddy – because I wouldn't be doing what I know I got to do – I got to do! I've seen your life – and now I see Daddy – and I love you, I love you both! – but I've got my work to do, something's happening in the world out there, I got to go! I know you think I don't know what's happening, but I'm beginning to see – something. Every time I play, every time I listen, I see Daddy's face and yours, and so many faces – who's' going to speak for all that, Mama! Who's going to speak for all of us! I can't stay home. Maybe I can say something – one day – maybe I can say something in music that's never been said before, Mama – you knew this day was coming.