

Flute Concerto – The Espionage

I – Anywhere But Here
II – One Regret
III – Three Moves Ahead

Instrumentation: Flute and Piano

Duration: 11'

Completed: 2008

Premiered: March 2009 by Shelley Binder and Judith Bible at the *Unfurling* Senior Composition Recital at the University of Tennessee

The concerto was inspired by my poem entitled *Espionage* and, in a wider sense, by my fascination with the spy thriller genre. I loved the Jason Bourne films with Matt Damon and Mission Impossible with Tom Cruise. Whenever there is a chase across Europe involving trains, old Volvos, period hotels with tall ceilings, crowded subway stations, and miniature coffee shops, I am completely sold.

The concept of espionage, to me, from the romanticized and artistic standpoint, has little to do with the actual spying or betrayal. It's all about a state of mind; escapism, hiding the true self under a disguise, adapting to quickly-changing circumstances, improvisation, alienation, uncertainty, overcoming fear. In a word, a wealth of emotional material for personal contemplation and art making.

The first two movements of the concerto, "Anywhere But Here" and "One Regret", feature quickly shifting harmonies, lots of internal tension and emotional brooding. The third movement entitled "Three Moves Ahead" is a fast-paced chase with a healthy dose of flute virtuosity involving fast staccato passages, quick runs, and flutter tongue articulation. Once again, as in several of my previous compositions, I return to jazz and pop allusions which are scattered across various harmonic progressions and rhythmic patterns. I dedicated the concerto to my flute teacher Shelley Binder.

Espionage

*An agent is easy to spot in a crowd
He wears a three-day stubble
And a white cotton shirt
With nonchalantly rolled up sleeves*

*Behind designer shades
The dark circles under his eyes
Betray his liberties
With multiple time zones
And he always pays with cash*

*When a long-legged brunette
Brings him a martini
He acknowledges her
With a chilled smile
And a quick sweep-around
From the corners of his eyes*

*The train arrives
At fourteen past twenty
That leaves exactly
Twelve and a half yards
From the nearest exit
With a full tank of gas
And a set of scalpels
Milan should be within reach
Before daybreak*

*This time of the year in Belgrade
The satellite phone reception
 Kate wanted a small wedding
Is intermittent with contradicting instructions
 But her father insisted on the country club
It's all about planning and some improvisation
 He was impressed with the ivy league degree
A steady hand and relaxed breathing
 She never enjoyed reading
A flawless poker face
 Chattered endlessly about nothing
Moss green eyes that perceive everything
 And interrogated him about his feelings
Yet reveal nothing
 She always thought he was obsessive-compulsive
The meeting is in the usual place
 Too nit-picking
Walk confidently but not abruptly
 Why did he ask her about the front brakes?
Let them assume whatever they may
 And then he left so suddenly on Monday
The key is in the glove compartment
 He is so utterly boring*

*Of a Volvo which is parked
 And completely lacks imagination
Sixty five meters from the intersection
 Some men have wit and an aura of danger
Rely on gut feeling, spatial coordination and
 They know what they want
Be three moves ahead of competition
 And take it without hesitation
It becomes second nature
 Is it too much to want a little adventure?
Always carry an extra pair of latex gloves
 Maybe he has someone?
Dental floss can also do the trick
 No, he couldn't hide anything
The German passport is inside the cover
 She will tell him they could try harder
Of Crime and Punishment on the second shelf
 And give it more time
When exposed deny everything
 Talk things through
Remove all traces of evidence
 Try to remember what brought them together
Lay low for a while and
 Ease up on all this travel
Resurface in Zurich by Friday
 Or remodel the house
Then evaluate the difference
 Or have a baby
Between real and perceived danger
 Or just call it quits
When in doubt abort the mission
 It's half past midnight
The safe house has a first aid kit
 And he is not going to call after all
And a one way ticket to Madrid*

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