

## Order

*Scribble scribble scribble scribble scribble*

That is all he heard as he went about preparing his presentation, grabbing the sheet music that he had prepared for the class as he went to the rows of each table and passed a stack that was relative to the number of students. He smiles at each person as he sees them. This truly was one of the best parts of his life for him, seeing eager students who wanted to learn the beauty and conception of the piano.

Suddenly, he sees a hand raise. The hand belonging to a tigress.

“Yes, Mrs. Foster?” He asked.

“Mr. Kern?” She asked. “How are you doing today?”

The yellow dragon smiled at the tiger. Appreciative of the inquiry, this is why he enjoyed it here so much. “I am quite alright.” This of course was a lie. He would be determined to never tell his students why it was that they were the best part of his day. They were here to take his piano composition class, not to hear his life predicament.

He continued by asking. “How is everything for you all? Little tired? Excited for the weekend tomorrow?”

He saw a lot of happy responses and eager nods. He certainly couldn’t agree more.

Outside of being a piano composition instructor in high school, he was a renowned pianist. Originally from Germany having immigrated when he was 18 years old. Quickly music became his only source of communication as he did not know English. He learned piano when he was 12 years old and has played it ever since. In his time in America, he has played over 50

piano concerts in his career spanning 23 of his 42 years of life. And spent about the last 8 years of that as a high school piano instructor, and frankly considered one of the greatest, especially according to the students. And he was about to play his 58<sup>th</sup> concert this weekend.

“That is great everyone!” He said delightfully as he finished passing out the sheet music. “Now, tell me what some of your answers were for the warmup today. Your prompt was to write a short description of any composer whom you admire.”

This next part couldn’t have been more predictable. He heard various people say “Mozart” and “Tchaikovsky” and “Chopin” and “Bach” and “Beethoven”. Not that there was anything wrong with those responses, they are masters of their creations.

“Wonderful to hear that from you guys. Well, today we are going to discuss the idea of permutation. One of the most important aspects of song structure. Having to come up with a certain order of all crucial elements. Pitches, parameters of your music, dynamics, and how that ties into the way different movements of piano concertos. Why it all is affected.” The dragon said, his wings shifting a bit as he quickly turned and walked to the bench of the piano in his room.

He sets the piano sheet music aside, for he did not need them as he pulls up his sleeves and turns to the class. He then looked at the class. “Look at the sheet music and follow along. This first one is from Mozart’s Piano Concerto No. 13. Try and see what the tempo and pitch might be for this. We start at measure 60.”

With that, he sets his hands on the keys as his fingers fly over the keys. His scaled fingertips hit the cold keys, starting with the lovely melody and adding the simple trills of inflection. Gliding through the travels of pitch, before he paused in the music and tilted his head

a bit as he performed a long trill, enough to send goosebumps down one's spine. Bringing it down before going up and down the scales, before going through the alternating vortex of notes. Making the music seem to enter your soul before he stops about thirty-one measures in. He turned to the class who all seemed lost in space from hearing the music.

He snapped his fingers, the snap sparking from his sharp nails. "Hey! Wake up! Now, what did you notice about this piece?"

He waited a bit before a mouse raised their hand. "Mr. Brady! Go ahead!"

"I noticed that it was one of the most heavenly pieces I had ever heard." The mouse chuckled as the room nodded and murmured in agreement with him.

He rolled his eyes before he stated. "I appreciate that. But did anybody notice what this movement was and its permutation?"

The tigress from earlier then raised her hand, I nodded to her as she explained. "I think this was an Allegro movement because of the slow tempo that you had. And it was in common time."

"That is correct. You can notice especially in the length of the trills how it was stretched out. This concert was less than a half-hour long, so Mozart focused on stretching out the music as much as possible. That is why he is highly regarded for the detail of his composition; did anyone figure out the pitch?"

Then a fox with long curly hair raised their hand, as I called on them. "Yes, Mr. Puth!" I was excited to hear this fox's answer as I was convinced they had perfect pitch."

"It was in C major sir!" The fox answered.

“Very good! That is correct. You can notice from the first set of notes and the little scale that glides through. Now, flip to your next sheet music.” He instructed before turning back to the piano.

He went about playing two other pieces. The first is Chopin’s Piano Concerto No. 1 in E major, beginning in the carried-over note of the 16<sup>th</sup> measure in the third movement. The playful and upbeat syncopated notes create a fun sound. It was a Rondo form with its couplets and digressions in its rhythm.

The second piece was Brahms’ Piano Concerto No. 2 in B-flat major. Starting at about the 106<sup>th</sup> measure in the first movement in an Allegro non Troppo. The raining notes into the intense sound of the music, as the deepness of the piano moving in the flat notes of the piano combining with the higher notes to create a perfect mesh of melody and building climax.

When he was finally done, he relaxed his hands in his lap and turned to the students who only seemed to be treating it as a performance and not a lesson.

He laughs before he says. “Enjoying it huh? Well, now you see how much beauty and thought goes into how you order your music around. It is a very fun skill if you use it well. How many of you would want to compose song structures like these?”

At the mere mention, all the hands shot up. A swell of pride that he could be a part of convincing these students how music is so transformational. It certainly helped his own life. Through the issues of being an immigrant, using music to gain popularity, being able to go to college because of it, gaining a beautiful dragon bride, and now dealing with the current state of the relationship. He feels the pride turn to sorrow as he quickly flashes away from it.

“Well, that is about all that I have for you guys today! For your homework this weekend I want you to go home and look up any piano concerto by any composer and write a single-page paper explaining the analytical details. Other than that, feel free to chat and relax before the class is over and your weekend begins.” He smiled at his students before he picked up his stuff and closed down the piano.

After another 10 minutes of open class time, the bell rang, and the students grabbed their stuff and thanked him before filing out of the room. He also packed up his bag of stuff before making his way out of the classroom, he departed waving at a couple of other music teachers in the department.

Once he gets out of the building he makes his way to his car, hitting the button to unlock as he opens the door and climbs in. Setting his bag in and closing the door careful of his wings and tail. He starts the engine and slowly drives away. Before driving out of the parking lot and onto the road headed towards the freeway. Tapping his fingers on the steering wheel as he drives, the melodies of the pieces he played today circulate in his brain on repeat. But it made him smile.

He eventually makes it to the freeway and drives a couple of miles south of the school in the direction of his home. But he wasn't going home, not yet at least. He takes an exit road and pointed to the *St. Therese Hospital*.

“Hope you are doing alright today sweetie.” He spoke out loud to nobody. But hopeful of his wife's condition getting better.

This plagues his mind in fear and worries soon after, as he gets in view of the hospital. Knowing exactly where his wife's room was, for having memorized it well from going here for the past 4 months.

He drove into the parking lot, parked, turned off the engine, and got out of the car. He then stood there for a moment before he let out a shaky breath and began walking toward the entrance of the hospital.

TO BE CONTINUED