

Secret Notes

for solo violin and ensemble or chamber orchestra,
opus 19 (violin concerto no.2)

I. keep them in the dark
II. keep silent
III. leaked out

commissioned

by The Los Angeles Philharmonic New Music Group; Esa-Pekka Salonen, Music Director

composed

between 18th September 2000 and 20th June 2001

dedicated

to Christopher Hailey

duration

ca. 22 min.

premiered

on 15th April 2002 at the Zipper Hall in Los Angeles (U.S.A.) by Marijn Simons (violin), The Los Angeles Philharmonic New Music Group & Yasuo Shinozaki (conductor)

published

by Donemus

recorded

by Marijn Simons (violin), the Netherlands Radio Chamber Orchestra and James MacMillan (conductor) on NorthWest Classics NWC 412152

scoring

Solo Violin

Flute (also Piccolo)

Oboe (also Cor Anglais)

Clarinet in Bb (also Bass Clarinet in Bb)

Bassoon (also Contrabassoon)

Horn in F

Trumpet in C

Trombone

Percussion (1 or 2 players): 4 Boo-bams or Octabons, Roto-tom, 2 Low Drums (use drums with a low and dry sound), 5 Tom-toms, Low Floor-tom, Junior Conga (high tuned), Tambourine, 2 Wood Blocks (one medium, one high), 3 Temple Blocks, 2 Timbales, Hi-Hat

Accordion (with baritone/melody bass & standard bass)

Strings (either solo or multiple)

technical specifications

Sound reinforcement for Solo Violin and Accordion:

1. DPA Miniature Microphone for Solo Violin
2. Microphone on stand for Accordion
3. On-stage PA speakers
4. Mixing desk in the auditorium

Marijn Simons on *Secret Notes*:

The title *Secret Notes* seems to make no sense at all, for every separate note is there in the score to read. But what composer would resist a commission from M^o Esa-Pekka Salonen & The Los Angeles Philharmonic New Music Group and would not immediately start composing, or at least brainstorming about such a commission. I certainly wouldn't! As a consequence I got into problems with deadlines of other commissions. Whatever excuses I tried to think of, the truth came out. Perhaps the title won't seem so strange now.

The trombone concerto (*Concerto Comique, opus 17*) is the first composition in which I didn't write "notes" any longer. Before, I used to work with themes and motives in a

-call it- classical way. In my opus 17 this changed and it caused an enormous inner struggle. For the first time I didn't use the unconscious support of composers I admired such as Stravinsky, Copland, Villa-Lobos, Milhaud and some others. I had been confronted with myself!

Now I am composing in sound colours -you could call them sound tonalities- and I try to find notes (and instruments!) to construct this sound tonality. Which notes they are is of no importance.

The obsessive urge to compose a continuum -as in the second part of my opus 17- is carried out very strictly in *Secret Notes*. Each part has its own specific sound tonality with a polyphonic stratification built up from tiny motives that form one big closed whole, as in a mosaic. These independent layers fight a grim battle for the top musical position, as in a Concerto Grosso from the Baroque. The fragility of these sound tonalities is great: one note too much or too little and the whole composition will collapse like a house of cards.

In my youthful boldness I thought I could easily compose a consonant final part. Dissonance -squirming and strangling- had been a normal practise for me in all my compositions before the trombone concerto. The four-minute-long third part *leaked out* is, on the contrary, fully consonant. I was deceived! Every minute that I finished with a struggle doubled my admiration and respect for a master of consonance: Aaron Copland.

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