

SCENE & ARIA: LAYOVER IN CDG

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Note

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Duration: 6'

Instrumentation: clarinet, violin and cello

I wrote *Scene & Aria: Layover in CDG* at the end of a very busy season, when I was traveling incessantly. It was, in fact, composed entirely in hotel rooms and on airplanes, and - most memorably - during a layover in Charles DeGaulle airport in Paris. This airport is, I must admit, my least favorite in the world. Frequently, one must get on a kind of elevator shuttle bus to get from the plane to the gate, and vice versa. Plus it is usually necessary to reclaim luggage and take a shuttle to a different terminal for connecting flights. While boasting some of the most inconvenient, non-ergonomic connections, CDG also seems to boast some of the shortest layover times. I have probably missed around 50% of my connecting flights through CDG. I decided to let swiftly changing, bustling musical moods provide a kind of imagined soundtrack to my layover. There are narrative images in the score that only the players see - "passport control;" "finding my gate number;" "stopping for a cafe au lait;" etc. The "Scene" part of the piece is bustling and busy, while the wistful "Aria" is accompanied by a single narrative notation: "memories of my trip."

I knew that the performers I would be coaching at the Bennington Chamber Music Conference were dedicated amateur musicians, holding jobs in fields like environmental physics, neurosurgery and biological defense. During the coaching process we honed our collective images of the journey, and even came up with more elements in the story - arguments between traveling spouses, lost luggage. . . Just six minutes long, for trio of clarinet, violin and cello, I wasn't ready to leave the piece afterwards: it became the fodder for my 10-minute-long *The Project of Collecting Clouds* (which incorporates percussion and spoken text).

– Lisa Bielawa

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