

Meeting with Croatia's greatest composer, Djelo Jussic

by Liona Boyd

How could I forget my birthday in Dubrovnik? The grey rain-filled morning skies as I ran down the hill over puddles to meet you in the Stradun cafe, wondering if you would arrive or leave me waiting alone again as you had two days earlier... the pilgrims in plastic raincoats who tied a silver saint medallion around my neck and handed me a knotted string rosary...then you and the sun suddenly appearing together...two frothy capuchinos and your pipe smoke in the wind as I sang you my words to Kapetanis and Dobro Jutro Margareta. A white bag filled with bright red tomatoes swinging in your hands as we walked up the hill past the old city walls and moat, our arms linked together under a black umbrella...the steep climb up your steps to your house, walls full of posters and gold/platinum albums, your collection of sculptures, pipes, scores and erasers and your unmade bed. And then your music... the pieces I had first heard in the theater, your delicate, powerful guitar concerto, your film score evoking the sun and rain, the birds and the horrors of war in your beautiful city... your love songs, your ballet. You cut the medallion off my neck and brought me tea from England, slices of cantaloupe from the market, marzipan chocolates and socks to warm my feet...and then the summer skies exploded and the rain began to fall like crazy on the rooftops...lightening striking over and over again the Locrum and thunder crashing in time to your symphonic timpany rolls. You played my CD, Moorish Dance and Tarrega's Gran Jota until suddenly the power cut out and all we heard was the incessant pounding of the deluge as we watched in awe from your balcony, your arms around my waist. You played me the piano while standing then the music returned and we started to dance a waltz... your music, my music, your hands, my hands, your arms around me and the brush of your lips against my neck, the touch of your silver hair and our cheeks drawing closer to end in a gentle kiss as the music played and the rain weakened...that unexpected birthday afternoon in Dubrovnik with you, the music and the rain.

Liona