

Concerto for Flute, Tablas and Strings.

I wrote this concerto in 2008 at the request of Gabriele Di Iorio, the artistic director of the Teatro Marrucino in Chieti, Italy, which at the time had a stable orchestra. My idea was to build on my ten years' experience with Badal Roy, who had been tablas player for Miles Davis and Ornette Coleman, and with whom I had worked and recorded in a trio situation of flute, tablas and bass.

Badal had shared with me various rhythmic cycles; some of which were of his own invention, or at least reinterpretation from the Indian classical to the Afro-American. What I wanted to do was start out from these patterns and build a chamber-jazz texture using a classical form, the concerto.

There are two cadenza points, located in the first and third movements. Other improvisation is limited to some moments of "fill" where I have specified the scale, and a "solo" over "rhythmic section" in the third movement where I have written out a possible interpretation.

The double bass player functions as a jazz bassist, that is, a solo double bass playing pizzicato. He too has a couple of "fill" moments with possible versions provided in the score, as well as the possibility of playing from chord symbols during the flute solo in the third movement if he so desires.

The "string section" (violins 1,2, violas and 'cellos) functions for much of the time, separately from the double bass, acting almost like the "comping" left hand of a jazz pianist, or a saxophone section in a big band. On other occasions all the strings act together, more in the manner of a classical orchestra, although the double bass remains pizzicato. The concerto could be performed by a string quartet with bass, tablas and flute, but I feel a fuller string section is more effective.

The tabla part provided gives the basic rhythms and instructions on the form of the piece. It is understood that the performer will elaborate his part in the usual manner of a tablas player.

Depending on the context some amplification may be necessary. Probably the double bass will need amplifying, and depending on the size of the string section the tablas may need amplifying too. It may even be decided to amplify the whole ensemble.

I have chosen to make available the audio playback from the Finale programme. This is of course nothing like the sound of my concerto and I may well be taking a risk here. In particular, there are no available tabla sounds so what we have on these demos is a sort of plastic bongo. However, I found, during rehearsals that these recordings were particularly useful to the musicians in the orchestra in getting to know the rhythmic aspects of the work.

Two years after the first performance of this concerto, the orchestra of the Teatro Marrucino had its funding terminated. I remain very grateful to all the musicians who took part in that first performance, for their professionalism and dedication.

Geoff Warren.