

## **WHEN YOU APPEAR by Roxanna Panufnik**

### **La Reina - The Queen**

I have named you queen,  
There are taller than you, taller.  
There are purer than you, purer.  
There are lovelier than you, lovelier.  
But you are the queen.

When you go through the streets  
No one recognizes you.  
No one sees your crystal crown, no one looks  
At the carpet of red gold  
That you tread as you pass,  
The nonexistent carpet.

And when you appear  
All the rivers sound  
In my body, bells  
Shake the sky,  
And a hymn fills the world.

Only you and I,  
Only you and I, my love,  
Listen to me.

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When the European Concert Halls Organization commissioned me to write a piece for trombonist Peter Moore, I went to his recital at the Wigmore Hall. I was immediately struck by his beautiful lyrical tone, especially when he was playing Fauré songs. This inspired me to write a "song without words" for him to capitalize on this.

Some years ago at a cousin's wedding, Chilean poet Pablo Neruda's "La Reina" (The Queen) was read out by the groom to the bride – I was so moved by its raw emotion and its honesty! Written to his mistress (who later became his wife), he starts the poem by saying that there are taller, purer and lovelier than her but she is, nevertheless, his Queen. For this song without words, I have used a slowed down Chilean dance rhythm, the "Cueca", as there is some trepidation as to how this description will be received! He goes on to say that no one notices her crystal crown, red gold "non-existent" carpet as she walks down streets – the music here is quieter and more mysterious with falling Chilean guitar-like broken chords. This leads to an outright and outrageously romantic all-out declaration of love – of the passion he feels when his mistress appears.

I then bring back the initial "Cueca" faster and more confident and even more joyous, infusing it with Chilean guitar rhythms. More passionate declarations ensue and the piece finishes quietly as he declares that only he and she are in on the secret of their love.

I am hugely grateful to YCAT's Sue Hudson for connecting Peter and I, and to Catalina Herrera Acuña, Cultural Attaché at the Chilean Embassy, for introducing me to Chilean music experts Rachel Pantin and Mauricio Venegas and Neruda translator and biographer Adam Feinstein. The piece lasts approximately 8 minutes.

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