

JACK & BELLA – Music Theory

BELLA

Deadpan.

You're trying to impress me by modulating from C to G.

JACK

You think I'm done.

BELLA

Impressing?

JACK

Modulating. And we're not in G.

BELLA

We're so in G. There's an F-sharp. That's a G.

JACK

That is a G. But this is not an F-sharp. It's also fake.

BELLA

All right, this does it. Move over. Move over!

Jack moves over. She drags a chair right next to him and sits down. Jack keeps on writing, trying very hard not to be distracted by her and occasionally succeeding.

We are in G. The orchestra parts: B, C, D, G!, B, C, D, G! That's certainly in G. And what you are writing now... is... the same four measures. You're repeating. You don't need them to get to G, you're already in G. You say you're lazy, but you are lying.

JACK

I am lazy.

BELLA

And you're lying. And you be quiet. F-sharp that's not an F-sharp. F-sharp to G. It's a – leading tone?

Jack grins and gives her a tiny little shove with his shoulder.

You fucker, it's a leading tone, it doesn't mean a thing. So why are you repeating? Not for the F-sharp, not for the G.

She stares at the music – and then she gets it.

You need this for the flats. A-flat, B-flat, E-flat. You in G minor, you cheater. No! No, you're not! B, C, D, G! That's G major! Parallel keys. Major to minor. You're alternating.

JACK

Alternando! Alternando quest' e quello! Beethoven does it all the time.

BELLA

You are not Beethoven.

JACK

Of course not, have you heard “Fidelio”, I’m considerably better!

BELLA

Pushes away from him, standing up.

“Fidelio” is gorgeous, I could sing you the whole –

JACK

I know you can sing, but can you hum? Nobody hums “Fidelio”!

BELLA

So for you humming is more important than // singing –

JACK

For me humming and singing is more important than singing by its poor lonesome, the singing you cannot hum!

BELLA

Fine. Fine! What about – Donizetti?

JACK

Ah, Donizetti. Poor fellow. He wants to write music so badly. So he does it: he writes music so badly.

Pause.

The real opera is gone. It died out with the castrati. Their art was pure and light. Mine is... encumbered.

BELLA

Ice-cold.

Heavily, I’m sure. Are you still modulating?

JACK

That depends on where we end up.

Pause.

BELLA

You didn’t ask me to stay to help you with the vocal line, did you.

JACK

I asked you to stay to help me write better. I'd tell you where music comes from, but you might be a lady.

Pause.

BELLA

Where are we?

JACK

In the chorus. G. F-sharp.

BELLA

G major.

JACK

Back to G. F-natural.

BELLA

G minor.

JACK

Down to E-flat.

BELLA

Still in – what?

JACK

Resolving from G, where to?

BELLA

Back into C?

JACK

How many flats were there?

BELLA

Three. C-minor. All this work and you're only in –

JACK

What has three flats and is not C minor?!

BELLA

E-flat major.

Pause.

And you just landed on E-flat.

Pause.

You modulated from C major to E-flat major.

Pause.

You know what you're doing!

You know, I'd rather be here than anywhere else. If we met at the reception, we'd be standing around with our glasses of cheap Chianti, calling each other Signor and Signora. In the dressing room, we can cuss up a storm and call each other darling.

JACK

"Darling" is nice.

BELLA

Yeah. You know I sang "Elizabeth"? Your "Elizabeth"? In Naples? And that music was – wonderful?

JACK

I was in the audience.

BELLA

You didn't come up to me.

JACK

I was afraid.

BELLA

Of me?

Jack nods.

Are you still afraid?

JACK

Less.

Bella sits down next to him.

BELLA

What about now?

JACK

Even less.

She rests her head on his shoulder.

BELLA

And now?

JACK

Almost not at all.