

CHESS

di Tim Rice - Björn Ulvaeus - Benny Andersson

Personaggi:

THE MAYOR
THE AMERICAN
THE RUSSIAN
MOLOKOV
THE ARBITER
FLORENCE
SVETLANA
CITIZENS
DIPLOMATS
CIVIL SERVANTS

MERANO

CITIZENS OF MERANO

O light the heart
That lingers in Merano
Merano! The spa no
Connoisseur of spas would miss
So healthy
Highly recommended
Is this sweet metropolis
Mental and physical bliss!

The gods have smiled
And bless-ed is Merano
Merano! There are no
Fitter burghers to be found
Such vigour!
Take the time to taste us
We'll give you a welcome that's typically Tirol
For then we are sure of our ground
Fight now we're Italian -- we used to be German
The border keeps shifting around

MAYOR

Speaking as one of the patriarchs
I don't mind taking your lira or marks

CITIZENS

Oh I get high when I saunter by the mountains of Merano
Rosy-cheeked Merano
Flourishing to a fault
The sparkling streams, the bracing air
The therapeutic salt
I'd have to be carried away to call a halt!

Oh I feel great in this bouncing state o hail to the Merano
Hearty hale Merano
Any objections? Nein!
Where breathing in will turn you on
Where water tastes like wine
Get out your get up and go and get in line

It's living your life in a show by Rodgers and Hammerstein!

O sad the soul
Who passes by Merano
Merano! so far no
Soul has ever passed us by
They love us
Why not stay forever?
Oh so many reasons why
All those in favour say "Aye"
Aye!

So sing a song
Let's hear it for Merano
Merano! Soprano
Alto, tenor, bass agree
We're wholesome
What a happy haven
This is a place where your arteries soften
Cholesterol hasn't a chance
From mountain to valley the natural goodness
Is fighting pollution's advance

MAYOR

So come to us and feel the force
All major credit cards taken of course

CITIZENS

Oh I get high when I saunter by the mountains of Merano
Rosy-cheeked Merano
Flourishing to a fault
The sparkling streams, the bracing air
The therapeutic salt
I'd have to be carried away to call a halt

Once in a while all the gods will smile on little old Merano
Humble shy Merano
Suddenly hits the press
And I report with all the pride
And joy that I possess
Half of the world and his wife has our address
Our little town will be rife with games of chess!

CITIZENS

Get up your get up and go and get in line
It's living your life in a show...

THE AMERICAN

What a scene! What a joy!
What a lovely sight
When my game is the big sensation!
Has the mob's sporting taste
Altered overnight?
Have they found new sophistication?

Not yet! They just want to see
If the nice guy beats the bum
If it's East-West
And the money's sky-high
They all come

You can raise all you want

If you raise the roof
Scream and shout and the gate increases
Break the rules -- break the bank
I'm the living proof
They don't care how I move my pieces

I know I'm the best there is
But all they want is a show
Well that's all right -- I'll be glad to oblige
All right! I'll be glad to oblige
All right! I'll be glad to oblige
S.R.O. S.R.O.

MAYOR & CITIZENS

Oh I get high when I saunter by the mountains of Merano
Rosy-cheeked Merano
Flourishing to a fault
The sparkling streams, the bracing air
The therapeutic salt
I'd have to be carried away to call a halt

Oh I feel great in this bouncing state o hail to the Merano
Hearty hale Merano
Any objections? Nein!
Where breathing in will turn you on
Where water tastes like wine
Get out your get up and go and get in line
It's living your life in a show by Rodgers and Hammerstein!

Now for the sell
We put the ice into paradise, we are the salt of the earth
Sound as a bell
Check out the waters
And check out the hygiene
At which we excel
Check into an hotel
And schnell
Body and soul
Get well!

THE RUSSIAN & MOLOKOV/ WHERE I WANT TO BE

MOLOKOV

The man is utterly mad -- you're playing a lunatic --

THE RUSSIAN

That's the problem. He's a brilliant lunatic and you can't tell
which way
he'll jump -- like his game he's impossible to analyse -- you
can't dissect
him, predict him -- which of course means he's not a lunatic at
all.

MOLOKOV

What we've just seen's a pathetic display
From a man who's beginning to crack
He's afraid
He knows he isn't the player he was
And he won't get it back

THE RUSSIAN

Nonsense!
Why do my seconds
Always want to believe
Third-rate propaganda --

MOLOKOV

My friend, please relax
We're all on your side
You know how you need us --

THE RUSSIAN

I don't need my army of so-called 'advisors'
And helpers to tell me
The man who's revitalised chess single-handed
Is more or less out of his brain
When it's very clear
He's sane

MOLOKOV

Listen, we don't underestimate anyone
We won't get caught in that trap
After all, winning or losing reflects on us all --

THE RUSSIAN

Oh don't give me that crap!
I win -- no one else does
And I take the rap if I lose

MOLOKOV

It's not quite that simple
The whole world's tuned in
We're all on display
We're not merely sportsmen --

THE RUSSIAN

Oh please don't start spouting that old party line
Yes I know it's your job but
Just get out and get me a chess-playing second
In thirty-six hours we begin
That is if you want to win!

Who needs a dream?
Who needs ambition?
Who'd be the fool
In my position?
Once I had dreams
Now they're obsessions
Hopes became needs
Lovers possessions

Then they move in
Oh so discreetly
Slowly at first
Smiling too sweetly
I opened doors
They walked right through them
Called me their friend
I hardly knew them

Now I'm where I want to be and who I want to be and doing what I
always said I would and yet I feel I haven't won at all

Running for my life and never looking back in case there's
someone
right behind to shoot me down and say he always knew I'd fall.

When the crazy wheel slows down
Where will I be? Back where I started.

Don't get me wrong
I'm not complaining
Times have been good
Fast, entertaining
But what's the point
If I'm concealing
Not only love
All other feeling.

Now I'm where I want to be and who I want to be and doing what I
always said I would and yet I feel I haven't won at all
Running for my life and never looking back in case there's
someone right behind to shoot me down and say he always knew I'd fall

When the crazy wheel slows down
Where will I be? Back where I started.

THE OPENING CEREMONY

ARBITER

I've a duty as the referee
At the start of the match
On behalf of all our sponsors
I must welcome you
Which I do -- there's a catch

I don't care if you're a champion
No one messes with me
I am ruthless in upholding
What I know is right
Black or white -- as you'll see

I'm on the case
Can't be fooled
Any objection
Is overruled
Yes I'm the Arbiter and I know best

CHORUS

He's impartial, don't push him, he's unimpressed

ARBITER

You got your tricks
Good for you
But there's no gambit I don't see through
Oh I'm the Arbiter I know the score

CHORUS

From square one he'll be watching all 64

ARBITER

If you're thinking of the kind of thing
That we've seen in the past

Chanting gurus, walkie-talkies,
Walkouts, hypnotists,
Tempers, fists -- not so fast

This is not the start of World War Three
No political ploys
I think both your constitutions are terrific so
Now you know -- be good boys

I'm on the case
Can't be fooled
Any objection
Is overruled
Yes I'm the Arbiter and I know best

CHORUS
He's impartial, don't push him, he's unimpressed

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From square one he'll be watching all 64

ARBITER
Yes I'm the Arbiter I know the score

CHORUS
From square one he's watching all 64

DIPLOMATS
No one can deny that these are difficult times...

It's the U.S. versus U.S.S.R.
Yet we more or less are --

No one can deny that these are difficult times...

-- to our credit putting all that aside
We have swallowed our pride

These are dangerous and difficult times...

It really doesn't matter who comes out on top, who gets the chop
No one's way of life is threatened by a flop --
But we're gonna smash their bastard
Make him wanna change his name
Take him to the cleaners and devastate him
Wipe him out, humiliate him

We don't want the whole world saying
They can't even win a game
We have never reckoned
On coming second
There's no use in losing

It's the U.S. versus U.S.S.R.
Yet we more or less are --

No one can deny that these are difficult times

-- to our credit putting all that aside
We have swallowed our pride

These are very difficult and dangerous times...

The value of events like this need not be stressed
When East and West
Can meet as comrades, ease the tension over drinks
Through sporting links
As long as their man sinks

MERCHANDISERS

Whether you are pro or anti
Or could not care less
We are here to tell you
We are here to sell you chess
Not a chance of you escaping from our wiles
We've locked the doors, we've blocked the aisles
We've a franchise worth exploiting
And we will -- yes we will!
When it comes to merchandising
We could kill

When you get up --
When you get up in the morning
Till you crash at night
You will have to live your life
With bishop, rook and knight
Clean your teeth with chequered toothpaste
Wear our vests
Our kings and queens on bouncing breasts
You could even buy a set
And learn to play
We don't mind we'll sell you something
Anyway

We've done all our market research
And our findings show
That this game of chess could be around
A month or so
Maybe it's a bit confusing
For a game
But Rubik's Cubes were much the same
In the end the whole world bought one
All were gone
By which time we merchandisers
Had moved on

By which time we had moved on!

ARBITER

I'm on the case, can't be fooled
Any objection is overruled
Don't try to tempt me -- you've no hope
I don't like women, I don't take dope
I'm the Arbiter I know the score

CHORUS

From square one he'll be watching all 64

ARBITER

You got your tricks -- good for you
But there is no gambit I don't see through
I'm the Arbiter and I know best

CHORUS

He's impartial don't push him he's unimpressed

ARBITER

I'm the Arbiter my word is law

CHORUS

From square one he'll be watching you...

EVERYONE

Don't you find it rather touching to behold
The game that came in from the cold
Seen for what it is -- religion plus finesse
Countries, classes, creeds, as one in
Love of chess

QUARTET/ A MODEL OF DECORUM

MOLOKOV

We wish, no must, make our disgust at this abuse perfectly clear.
We're here for chess -- are the U.S.? If so, why foul the
atmosphere?

FLORENCE

I must protest -- our delegation has a host of valid points to
raise,
Our player's sporting attitude's beyond all praise,
as any neutral would attest
But we concede the fact his masters bend the rules is not a
player's fault --
We'll overlook their crude political assault
and under protest will proceed

MOLOKOV

We wish, no must, make our disgust at this abuse perfectly clear
we're here for chess -- are the U.S.? How can you make such a
claim?

MOLOKOV

If your man's so sweet
Then why his fighting talk?
If he's not a cheat
Then why on earth
Did he go take a walk?

ARBITER

Point 17
No one-way screen
Will be allowed
In the hall

FLORENCE

Why let him loose?
He'll soon reduce
This great event
To a brawl

I am not surprised
He wanted fresher air
Once he realized
There was no hope
Of your lot playing fair

It's very sad
To see the ancient and
Distinguished game

How sad
To see
What used

That used to be To be

BOTH

A model of decorum and tranquillity
Become like any other sport
A battleground for rival ideologies
To slug it out with glee

THE RUSSIAN

Through the elegant yelling
disgust

Of this compelling dispute
clear

Comes the ghastly suspicion
are the U.S.?

My opposition's a fruit
atmosphere?

MOLOKOV

We wish, no must, make our
disgust

At this abuse perfectly

We're here for chess --

If so, why foul the

FLORENCE

ARBITER

I don't suppose

You'd understand the strain and pressure Point 23
The board will be
getting where he's got Made in Sweden

For then you'd simply call him Non-aligned wood
highly strung and not

Imply that he was one of those

THE RUSSIAN

But how can you

Work for one who
waiting here

Treats you like dirt?

Pay must be good
is our

MOLOKOV

It seems to us

There's little point in

all night for his return

And since a peaceful match

sole concern

FLORENCE

We won't make an official fuss

I'm not getting rich

My only interest

Is in something which

Gives me the chance

Of working with the best.

In short we rise

Above your guy's

Tantrums, dramas,

Dirty tricks

ARBITER

THE RUSSIAN

Point 31

I can only say

I hope your dream comes true

Till that far-off day

I hope you cope

With helping number two.

No game begun

By noon goes on

After six

THE RUSSIAN & FLORENCE

How sad

To see

ARBITER & MOLOKOV

It's very sad to see

The ancient and distinguished game that used to be

ALL

A model of decorum and tranquillity

Become like any other sport
A battleground for rival ideologies
To slug it out with glee

THE AMERICAN AND FLORENCE/ NOBODY'S SIDE

FLORENCE

You want to lose your only friend?
Well, keep it up, you're doing fine
Why this humiliation?
Why treat me like a fool?
I've taken shit for seven years
And I won't take it anymore

THE AMERICAN

I'm only teasing Soviets
With gentle bonhomie
And you've a better reason to be anti-them than me.

FLORENCE

There's a time and there's a place.

THE AMERICAN

Is this the girl who always said
She wants to know the truth?

FLORENCE

There's a time and there's a place...

CHORUS

1956 -- Budapest is rising
1956 -- Budapest is fighting
1956 -- Budapest is falling
1956 -- Budapest is dying

THE AMERICAN

I'd have thought you'd support
Any attack on these people
On the people who ran
Mindlessly over your childhood
Don't let them fool you for
Thirty years on they're the same

They see chess as a war
Playing with pawns just like Poland
If you walk out on me
They will have won their first battle
Wouldn't your father
Have begged you to stay in the game?

FLORENCE

He would -- but he didn't know you
He'd loathe your behaviour and so do I --
Why'd you have to do this to me?

What's going on around me
Is barely making sense
I need some explanations fast
I see my present partner
In the imperfect tense

And I don't see how we can last
I feel I need a change of cast
Maybe I'm on nobody's side

And when he gives me reasons
To justify each move
They're getting harder to believe
I know this can't continue
I've still a lot to prove
There must be more I could achieve
But I don't have the nerve to leave

Everybody's playing the game
But nobody's rules are the same
Nobody's on nobody's side
Better learn to go it alone
Recognize you're out on your own
Nobody's on nobody's side

The one I should not think of
Keeps rolling through my mind
And I don't want to let that go
No lovers ever faithful
No contract truly signed
There's nothing certain left to know
And how the cracks begin to show!

Never make a promise or plan
Take a little love where you can
Nobody's on nobody's side
Never stay too long in your bed
Never lose your heart, use your head
Nobody's on nobody's side

Never take a stranger's advice
Never let a friend fool you twice
Nobody's on nobody's side
Everybody's playing the game
But nobody's rules are the same
Nobody's on nobody's side

Never leave a moment too soon
Never waste a hot afternoon
Nobody's on nobody's side
Never stay a minute too long
Don't forget the best will go wrong
Nobody's on nobody's side

Never be the first to believe
Never be the last to deceive
Nobody's on nobody's side
Never make a promise or plan...

TERRACE DUET

FLORENCE

This is the one situation I wanted most to avoid
Nothing I say will convince him this isn't a trick.

THE RUSSIAN

A drink on a clear moonlit night -- I relax, she smiles
There's something peculiar going on.

FLORENCE

So with immaculate timing, I'm left to carry the can
Embarrassed, outnumbered, marooned --

THE RUSSIAN

Now she can't be working for them -- I mean us --
She seems so very straightforward -- but where is he?

FLORENCE

He has to come back -- he wanted this meeting, well didn't he?

THE RUSSIAN

Maybe he's scared -- just as scared as he was in the game.

FLORENCE

Oh, I just couldn't care less
He can go right ahead, go and wreck his career, I know I've done
my best

THE RUSSIAN

Well at least she's a good-looking spy.

FLORENCE

What if my Russian friend thinks that my plans
Are more of an intimate kind?
If I don't say something else soon
He'll go -- Nobody's on nobody's side!

THE RUSSIAN

Listen, I hate to break up the mood
Get to the point, begin the beguine
Haven't you noticed we're a protagonist short
In this idyllic, well-produced scene?

FLORENCE

All I can say is moments ago
He was right here ready and waiting

THE RUSSIAN

Never mind him -- I haven't missed him so far.

BOTH

Maybe it won't do any harm
To struggle on without his charm
Funny how all at once I feel that he can go jump off the mountain
I won't care

FLORENCE

This is the one situation I wanted most to avoid

THE RUSSIAN

My dear opponent -- I really can't imagine why

FLORENCE

So I am not dangerous then? -- what a shame!

THE RUSSIAN

Oh, you're not dangerous -- who could think that of you?

BOTH

You -- you are so strange -- why can't you be what you ought to be?

You should be scheming, intriguing, too clever by half --

THE RUSSIAN

I have to had it to you

For you've managed to make me forget why I ever agreed to this farce.

BOTH

I don't know why I can't think of anything

I would rather do

Than be wasting my time

On mountains with you.

FLORENCE QUILTS

THE AMERICAN

So you got what you want

What a nasty ambition!

Set me up, pull me down

Then exploit my condition

I should have guessed, woman

That if pressed, woman

You're on nobody's side but your own

And you're behaving

Like a mere woman

It's so clear, woman --

It's your sex!

Once they start getting old and getting worried

They let fly, take it out

On the one who supports them --

That's you I'm talking about

THE AMERICAN & FLORENCE

Who'd ever think it?

Such a squalid little ending

Watching you descending

Just as far as you can go

I'm learning things I didn't want to know

Who'd ever guess it?

This would be the situation --

One more observation --

How'd we ever get this far

Before you showed me what you really are?

FLORENCE

You'll be lost without me

To abuse like you're used to

THE AMERICAN

Go away! Just get out! Be someone else's parasite!

I'm not the kind to be vindictive

Holding some childish grudge

How could I be? I'm in the spotlight

Half of the world my judge

All I demand is those I work for

Those I give all my skills
All my time and pain
Those that I entertain
Give me the same compassion in return
But the fools never learn!

EMBASSY LAMENT

CIVIL SERVANTS

Oh my dear how boring
He's defecting
Just like all the others
He's expecting
Us to be impressed with what he's done here
But he
Hasn't stopped to think about the paperwork
His gesture causes
We've an embassy to run here
If these people can't strike
Blows for freedom
With a valid visa
We don't need 'em
If we seem offhand then please remember
This is nothing very special
He's the fourth we've had since last November
Who do these foreign chappies think they are?
And when he's safely in the West
He'll be the hero to discuss
The media will lionise him
Fame and fortune plus
No-one will recall it's
Thanks to us

Have you an appointment
With the consul?
If you don't we know what his
Response'll
Be, he will not see you, with respect it
Buggers up his very taxing schedule
Pushing peace and understanding
Let us hope this won't affect it
Far too many jokers
Cross the border
Not a single document
In order
Russia must be empty
Though we're all for
Basic human rights it makes you wonder
What they built the Berlin wall for
Who do these foreign chappies think they are?
And when you've filled in all the forms
And been passed clear of all disease
Debriefed debugged dedrugged disarmed
And disinfected please
Don't forget the guys
Who cut your keys

ANTHEM

THE RUSSIAN

No man, no madness
Though their sad power may prevail
Can possess, conquer, my country's heart
They rise to fail
She is eternal
Long before nations' lines were drawn
When no flags flew, when no armies stood
My land was born

And you ask me why I love her
Through wars, death and despair
She is the constant
We who don't care
And you wonder will I leave her -- but how?
I cross over borders but I'm still there now

How can I leave her?
Where would I start?
Let man's petty nations tear themselves apart
My land's only borders lie around my heart

ACT II

ONE NIGHT IN BANGKOK

THE AMERICAN

Bangkok, Oriental setting
And the city don't know that the city is getting
The creme de la creme of the chess world in a
Show with everything but Yul Brynner

Time flies -- doesn't seem a minute
Since the Tirolean spa had the chess boys in it
All change -- don't you know that when you
Play at this level there's no ordinary venue

It's Iceland -- or the Philippines -- or Hastings -- or --
or this place!

COMPANY

One night in Bangkok and the world's your oyster
The bars are temples but the pearls ain't free
You'll find a god in every golden cloister
And if you're lucky then the god's a she
I can feel an angel sliding up to me

THE AMERICAN

One town's very like another
When your head's down over your pieces, brother

COMPANY

It's a drag, it's a bore, it's really such a pity
To be looking at the board, not looking at the city

THE AMERICAN

Whaddya mean? Ya seen one crowded, polluted, stinking town --

COMPANY

Tea, girls, warm, sweet
Some are set up in the Somerset Maugham suite

THE AMERICAN

Get Thai'd! You're talking to a tourist
Whose every move's among the purest
I get my kicks above the waistline, sunshine

COMPANY

One night in Bangkok makes a hard man humble
Not much between despair and ecstasy
One night in Bangkok and the tough guys tumble
Can't be too careful with your company
I can feel the devil walking next to me

THE AMERICAN

Siam's gonna be the witness
To the ultimate test of cerebral fitness
This grips me more than would a
Muddy old river or reclining Buddha

And thank God I'm only watching the game -- controlling it --

I don't see you guys rating
The kind of mate I'm contemplating
I'd let you watch, I would invite you
But the queens we use would not excite you

So you better go back to your bars, your temples, your massage
parlours --

COMPANY

One night in Bangkok and the world's your oyster
The bars are temples but the pearls ain't free
You'll find a god in every golden cloister
A little flesh, a little history
I can feel an angel sliding up to me

One night in Bangkok makes a hard man humble
Not much between despair and ecstasy
One night in Bangkok and the tough guys tumble
Can't be too careful with your company
I can feel the devil walking next to me

HEAVEN HELP MY HEART

FLORENCE

If it were love I would give that love every second I had
And I do
Did I know where he'd lead me to?
Did I plan
Doing all of this for the love of a man?
Well I let it happen anyhow
And what I'm feeling now
Has no easy explanation

Reason plays no part
Heaven help my heart
I love him too much
What if he saw my whole existence
Turning around a word, a smile, a touch?

One of these days, and it won't be long, he'll know more about me
Than he should
All my dreams will be understood
No surprise
Nothing more to learn from the look in my eyes
Don't you know that time is not my friend
I'll fight it to the end
Hoping to keep that best of moments
When the passions start
Heaven help my heart
The day that I find
Suddenly I've fun out of secrets
Suddenly I'm not always on his mind

Maybe it's best to love a stranger
Well that's what I've done -- heaven help my heart
Heaven help my heart

ARGUMENT

FLORENCE
I would have thought in the average affair
That the first hint of trouble would be
Oh so small; barely perceptible, easy to miss
Why is ours on TV?

THE RUSSIAN
Listen -- you know as I do
Nothing's altered at all
I have no intention --

FLORENCE
Your personal life's
The lead on the news!
How do we ignore that?

THE RUSSIAN
I do and I must because otherwise I say
Goodbye to my hopes of retaining my title
If I should succumb to emotional blackmail I'm done --

FLORENCE
Looking after number one!

THE RUSSIAN
What do you mean?

FLORENCE
I mean it's always I this and I that
What happened to us?

THE RUSSIAN
All that I'm saying is I must make certain
That nothing distracts me from chess

Careless maybe

But I was
Ever so much

Now at least

Younger then

I know him well

Now at least

BOTH

I know I know him well

SVETLANA

FLORENCE

Wasn't it good?

Oh so good

Wasn't he fine?

Oh so fine

Isn't it madness

BOTH

He won't be mine?

Didn't I know

How it would go?

If I knew from the start

Why am I falling apart?

FLORENCE

SVETLANA

Wasn't it good?

Wasn't he fine?

Isn't it madness

He won't be mine?

He won't be mine?

But in the end he needs a

Little bit more than me --

More security

He needs his

Fantasy and freedom

I know him so well

It took time to understand him

BOTH

I know him so well