

FSMCD Vol. 14, No. 3

I Spy

Supplemental Liner Notes

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I Spy

FSM's online liner notes usually consist of supplemental commentary for which there was not sufficient space in the CD packaging. In the case of our CD reissue of Earle Hagen's two *I Spy* albums, we present a fascinating piece of primary research that came to us from a listener after the CD's release.

David Spencer is a musical theater writer and teacher, and author of *The Musical Theatre Writer's Survival Guide*. Among his musicals are two in collaboration with Alan Menken, *Weird Romance* (original cast album newly re-released by Columbia Masterworks as an on-demand download) and the upcoming *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz*. In 1985, David wrote a letter to Earle Hagen, one of his heroes. David had acquired the second (Capitol) *I Spy* album as a kid but had never been able to lay his hands on the first (Warner Bros.) LP. He had recently had his first "real show" produced—"the Public Theatre had commissioned me to write a colloquial English libretto for *La Bohème*"—and, as he recounts:

When I was that young (and younger) I thought nothing of just brazenly writing (respectful) letters to people I admired (that's how I started to know industry people), and so wrote one to Hagen, praising and thanking him for all his work meant to me; and then offering a trade: a tape of my *Bohème* for a tape of the [Vol. 1] album. Not only did he take me up on it, but his reply came in an envelope with the actual LP. He'd given me one of his remaining five copies!

With David's permission, here is a transcription of Hagen's letter. . .

October 28, 1985

Dear Mr. Spencer:

I got a real kick out of your letter. I'm not sure I want to be responsible for what you've become, unless you're happy about it. If you liked *I Spy*, you might pick up a copy of my book, *Scoring for Films*. All of the examples in it are from *I Spy*.

Naturally, I'm delighted that the Capitol album is one that you enjoy. I did too. The reason being that the Capitol album was the second of the *I Spy* records and I was in the off season and able to do every note of it. The first album (Warner Bros.) was done during the season when I was working (with a great deal of help) on five series a week. I had to have some help with it and I was never really satisfied with the way it turned out. Some of the cuts were extracted "as is" from my cues on the stage while others were arranged. The copies have dwindled down to a precious few. Five to be exact. I haven't even one copy of the Capitol album. Fortunately, I made a tape copy of it.

I'm sending you one of the five genuine monophonic recordings that I have left. The stereo copies have long since gone to friends and pupils. I will gratefully accept one of the equally rare, high-quality recordings of your version of *Bohème*. Having recently finished a musical play, which in view of today's costs will probably never see the light of day, I have nothing but respect for anyone who can write lyrics. Perhaps in this earlier album, you might find some additional textures that are usable. In any event, I'll give you a blow-by-blow description of each cut—where it came from—and who did it.

SIDE ONE

1. **I Spy** Arranged by Shorty Rogers.
2. **Tatia** Taken verbatim out of the score for Show #11.
3. **Hi Yo Scotty** Arranged by Shorty Rogers, Show #3.
4. **Angel** Arranged by Warren Barker, Show #8.
5. **Away We Go to Mexico** Extracted out of Show #10.
6. **Rickshaw Ride** Extracted out of the pilot.

SIDE TWO

1. **Away We Go to Mexico** Extracted out of Show #18.
2. **Ah So!** Composed and orchestrated by Hugo Friedhofer. This was practically verbatim from Show #12. As you may know, Hugo Friedhofer (a giant of a musician) alternated shows with me on *I Spy*. We had worked together at Fox Studios when I was under contract to Al Newman. I orchestrated Hugo's score for *The Young Lions* as well as a heck of a lot of others. He was special.
3. **The International Set** Extracted from the pilot.
4. **Another Kind of Blues** Extracted from the pilot.
5. **Fiesta del Sol** This cut is what made *I Spy* such fun to write. I wrote this as a cue for a Mexican episode the day we recorded the album. I had my copyist bring it to the date and we recorded it verbatim as it was used that morning. We stuck it on the album as the 13th cut.
6. **The Wonderfulness of You** This was another gem of Hugo's. It came from a Japanese show (#15) co-starring Julie London.
7. **Made in Hong Kong** Extracted from Show #1.

The reason that I have gone into the background of this album is because all of the cuts were from the first season. You'll notice that I used two tunes in the Capitol album, "Away We Go to Mexico" and "The Interna-

tional Set." The early album had an original version of "Mexico," while the Capitol album had the deuces and treys removed. The Capitol producer thought that this album would appeal to the Lawrence Welk crowd and that the original version was too hip. In any event, due to the popularity of the Bill Cosby show, *I Spy* is having a resurgence in the syndication market. I thought you might get a kick out of being able to place the music with the show if it plays there.

In any event, I accept your concomitant chutzpah, appreciation, passion, affection and paradoxical gratitude. I can live with that until I receive your tape with appreciation, passion, affection and gratitude. There's enough chutzpah in my family already.

Sincerely,

Earle Hagen