

Explanation

The scenario describes how a community of "trolls" (small, grotesque fairy-tale creatures with almost human properties which frequently play a role in Scandinavian folk stories) try to survive in the bitter coldness of the arctic winter. The music does not literally follow the plot of the story but rather describes the feelings and emotions of the Trolls.

The first movement starts with a slow introduction depicting the desolation of a dark polar landscape in midwinter time. No life seems possible in this barren environment, but slowly trolls appear, longing for contact and company. During the summer, they have hidden themselves for fear for the big animals, but now these are hibernating, the trolls dare to come forward. They have, however, during their isolation, forgotten how to communicate, and misunderstandings, interruptions and disputes emerge every time they try to start a conversation. After such a quarrel, they stand up, bow, apologize and endeavour to improve their relations, but soon the discussions get out of control again. The process repeats itself until the trolls get tired and grumbly withdraw in their subterranean hiding-places.

The second movement expresses the increasing despair of the trolls, as the winter drags on, the temperature falls further down and the sun continuously stays below the horizon. One of the trolls can not stand the situation and leaves his safe hiding-place to search for the sun. He gets lost in a life-threatening blizzard, but is rescued just in time by his companions and joins them in dull resignation.

When despair in the group is highest, a small stripe of light appears above the horizon. The trolls rush to a nearby hilltop the greet the sun, but soon darkness sets in again and the trolls remain disappointed and shivering in the cold.

In the third movement, spring has come at last. Nature frees itself from the grasp of the winter, but it is a violent process: water breaks through ice barriers with utter force, thunderstorms accompany the arrival of the spring and the trolls repeatedly have to rush for their lives to reach their safe homes. But eventually, the force of the sun defeats all destructive forces and harmony is re-established in Nature.

The common factor in all three movements is the eternal struggle between Chaos and Order and the everlasting quest for harmony in Nature. Music provides an excellent vehicle for expressing these processes: all stylistic means are possible and allowed to express the infinite variety of Nature and human imagination.

The composer