

Explanation

The work is based on thoughts expressed in the poem "*Quiero*" from the collection "*Cuentos para pensar*" (1999) by the Argentine poet Jorge Bucay (*1949, Buenos Aires), in English translation:

*I want you to listen to me without judgment,
to give me your opinion without counsel,
to trust me without provisions.*

*I want you to help me without deciding for me,
to take care of me without oppressing me,
to see me without seeing yourself in me.*

*I want you to embrace me without choking me,
to give me courage without stifling me,
to hold me without hanging on to me.*

*I want you to protect me without shielding me,
to get close without forcing yourself upon me.*

*I want you to know what you don't like about me,
and accept, not try to change.*

*I want you to know that you can count on me,
unconditionally.*

At first reading, the text of the poem seems rather lapidary, spoken by an unlikeable, commanding, and egocentric person. Still, it is likely that the first-person narrator realises that the person he (or she) addresses would justifiably make equally high demands. In essence, therefore, the speaker is making these demands on himself. While they may be noble and worthy of pursuit, they seem hardly easy to fulfil in everyday life. As such, they might evoke sympathy after all.

Thus, every demand or wish put forward by the speaker evokes a virtual reflection, confronting him with his own self and measuring his worth. This results in a dialogue between the flesh-and-blood narrator and his idealised, dreamed counterpart about their mutual relationship: by its abstract form an interesting basis for a musical piece, providing the listener food for thinking about his/her own relationship to others in general and his/her partner in particular.

By calling his collection "*Stories to reflect on*", the author implicitly indicates that making people stop and reflect, if necessary by provoking them with lapidary statements, was an important incentive for him in his creative work. The mirror is used here as a metaphor for the process of mental reflection and confrontation.

Remarks:

- (1) The work can also be performed with Dutch text. The music is for both languages the same (cf the Dutch part of this website, same cat.nr. 14).
- (2) The same text is used in the third movement of the work "Dialogues", cat.nr. 15.
- (3) The music is meant to create space between the lines and to evoke a mood which allows the expressed thoughts to ripen and grow. The action takes place in the audience's imagination. It is important that the spoken text tightly joins with the music and vice versa, in order to enable a continuous stream of thoughts to arise. The lines should be pronounced calmly and clearly, without pathos or raising the voice. The metronome indication represents the basic tempo, allowing for rubati during the entire piece, depending on the desired expressiveness. The half note tactus should, however, remain noticeable throughout.

The composer