

Explanation

The work was commissioned by my good friend Maarten van Veen in memoriam of his late wife Mary, who suddenly died 18 March 2012 after a marriage of more than 50 years. Maarten plays the clarinet in two trios, - one with violoncello and piano, the other with bassoon and piano - , and the work should suit both ensembles. The musical content of the trio should reflect different sides of Mary's personality, and we agreed that the music would concentrate on three aspects of life which were especially dear to her: Nature, philosophy and the joy of having people around her.

Thus, the first movement first depicts the idyllic, colorful nature at the family's country home Het Bergelt (Vierhouten, Netherlands) on a sunny summer day. Mary's relation to Nature is also the metaphore for her creative power, her capacity to stimulate people to extraordinary performances and to bring unexpected relations to light.

During the day, peace and harmony prevail in the landscape, but in the night, wild boars, deer and moles try to undo human efforts and to reshape the environment according to their own ideals, and rain, wind blasts and thunderstorms create destruction and chaos. Atonality, unusual noises and shrill effects illustrate the bewilderment caused by the uncontrolled powers of Nature. Eventually, calmness returns, but a feeling of melancholy remains in the human mind pondering over the short life of all beauty.

The second movement focusses on Mary's commitment to philosophy, theology, psychology and sociology, her activities as considerate psychotherapist and actively involved adviser trying to find solutions for difficult situations.

Musically, the sphere of introspection and discipline is evoked by the use of forms and tonal systems derived from Middle Age tunes. Towards the end of the movement, a climax is built up leading to a cascade of bell ringing as a symbol for a breakthrough of new insight and a liberation of old obsessions, so that the movement can end in peace and resignation.

The third movement commemorates Mary as the centre and soul of feasts, the propagator of unconventional ideas, lover of dance, sport and country life, and a faithful, caring friend for good and ill.

The music in this movement is joyful and festive, with a self-willed rhythm stemming from the Greek-Bulgarian-Turkish tradition of asymmetric measures: in this case basically 2+3+2+2, but syncopes and changements of measures bring surprises and disturbances. Towards the end, the tempo slows down to Lento in a reminiscence of the first movement. The work ends with a bouncy, short reprise and Coda.

The composer