

Lebenslieder

Daybreak – Nachtmusik – Scherzo

for orchestra or chamber ensemble with electronics

Lebenslieder is a song-symphony for orchestra or chamber ensemble with electronics. The vocal part consists of extracts from recorded interviews with people with dementia and their partners who care for them. Their voices are translated directly into orchestral material, bringing the experience of living with dementia into the concert hall, breaking the silence that often surrounds the topic, and giving voice to the real-life, day-to-day experience of what is fast becoming the defining medical condition of our age.

The work is in three movements, which may also be performed as stand-alone pieces:

Daybreak concerns the moment that those with dementia, or those close to them, first started to notice something was different: the ‘dawning’ of the realisation that there may be a ‘problem’. It also considers the subsequent reactions of family, colleagues and friends, as the reality of dementia is brought into the full light of day.

Nachtmusik reflects on the night-time experiences of people with dementia and those caring for them: difficulty sleeping, nocturnal wanderings, tiredness. It portrays that time of night when worries and concerns seem somehow magnified, and the sleeping world seems far away and indifferent.

Scherzo considers the importance of reminiscence when more recent memories are being lost, and how, for some, humour can be an important way of responding positively to the challenges of life with dementia.

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