

NIGHT DANCES for solo clarinet, solo dancer and chamber orchestra

NIGHT DANCES is a double concerto for solo clarinet, solo dancer and chamber orchestra. Spatially, the clarinetist stands as soloist to one side of the conductor and the solo dancer stands on the opposite side. The dancer performs in as small a space as possible, functioning as a visual translation and alter ego to the clarinet part rather than presenting a traditional theatrical choreography. They share this rhythmic interplay, one with music and the other with movement. Her movements are to be simple, poetic and focused, without the trappings of multimedia, such as lights and theatrical costumes. There are spaces filled with solo clarinet cadenzas, but there are also blocks of silences filled with visual cadenzas by the dancer.

In its essence, **NIGHT DANCES** is about death. Not death as an evil and an unexpected intruder into life, but death as a natural part of the cycle of all life; One of life's rituals.-- It reflects the composer's involvement with his inability to cope with the death of his own father when the composer was 19. It specifically is about that moment of truth when the young deer looks up and sees the hunter pointing his gun at him. It is about that precise point in time when he starts to leap away, when denial no longer works and there is only the grim reality of the puff of smoke from the gun. It is about the moment when we all look into the coffin and truly see the death mask, the painted, cold unmoving face of someone close to us who is now dead. It is about that moment in time when all of the defense mechanisms no longer work and we must feel the loss-- If I may, as I hear it, it brings me back to a contemporary *Swan Lake* or *Liebes Tod*.