

Preface

Poems is a cycle consisting of twelve pieces for piano. The pieces were composed to be also suitable for performance by children, the demands for each piece vary considerably. All the pieces are extremely short and concentrated. My aim was to undertake a personal exploration of this "miniature form". Each title is associated with (auto)biographical connotations of the (tonal) self, particularly as the starting point for some of these movements delves far back into my past history.

Sad yellow whale: When writing music, I have the habit of painting over thrown away passages ... with a pencil, with a pen or also with watercolours ... one day a (sad) yellow whale appeared on the music-sheet...

Cantabile: a once ferocious motif came to my mind while running through some woods ... and became a bit melancholic ...

Babu Chiri's house: When walking through Nepal we slept in a house formerly owned by Babu Chiri, one of the most famous sherpas. He had been dead for some years by then (he fell into a crevasse on Mt. Everest) and his brother's family was running the lodge. In the dark kitchen someone hummed this melody again and again...

Waking up in Naging: waking up at cock's crow and being awakened BY a cock's crow in Naging...no mattress, only some wooden planks... I never liked those animals!

(The day) When I lost my funny green dog: I had a lovely cap with a funny green dog on it...it warmed my head when I walked up to a summit...however when going down I realised that it was not here anymore...

A little piece for Ursu: an endless, vast landscape pinned down by some few notes

Frida falls asleep: A child struggles against falling asleep...but not very successfully...

MUI 1: a number plate as the trigger for a little piece referring to the nights as Bartók might have imagined them...

one, two, three, four, nine: a new method of counting...invented by Stephanie in 2008...and an old melody from my „Illness“-piece...

12 years old: a piece I wrote in 1975...I took it up again in 2010 and made another ending...

Don't step on the regenwurm: Karin held a lecture at the Wissenschaftskolleg in Berlin and explained that earthworms feel the pain twice when they are torn apart....in each part of their body...

A song from?: ...definitely a song from my string quartet „Madhares"...I once had heard a Nepali melody and then could not get hold of it anymore...and I always imagined what this song could have been like...and so this came up. A long time later I came across the original melody again...what you believe is memory and your imagination can carry you far away from the origins, that's for sure...

Some of the pieces are very easy, for example *(The day) When I lost my funny green dog* or *Babu Chiri's house*. These stand in contrast to others with specific technical demands (e.g. slightly prepared piano in *one, two, three, four, nine* and the crossing of hands in *Frida falls asleep*).

Poems was created in response to a commission issued by the festival *Spannungen 2010* in Heimbach/Germany where the individual pieces of this cycle received their first performances by young pianists as an introduction to the festival concerts. The cycle was then planned to be performed in complete form either by Lars Vogt or myself at the end of the festival... Lars and I spent a long time deciding which of us would be willing to rise to the challenge of these difficult pieces... in the end it was Lars who had to bit the bullet!

Thomas Larcher
(translated by Lindsay Chalmers-Gerbracht)