DAVE MARIC

NASCENT FORMS

(2019)

For percussion quartet (two marimbas, two vibraphones)

Duration: approx. 16–17 minutes

1 movement – 5 sections

Nascent Forms was the first piece I composed in my new home in Scotland, after relocating from London in December 2018, and in the months following the birth of my daughter, Flora, in January 2019.

This location, the Bamff estate in north Perthshire, has been slowly transforming since the early 1990s. Small patches of wilderness have gradually replaced commercial woodland plantations and grassy fields historically used for sheep farming. This has come about both through human intervention (and non-intervention) and by allowing its key engineers, the beavers (resident since the early 2000s), to do much of the work for us. The process is set to accelerate in the near future, and I'm thrilled to live inside an ever-evolving project of ecological restoration. A symbiotic relationship has since developed: it informs everything I do as a composer and artist, and is closely bound up with my own contribution to the project.

This piece was my first response to the powerful inevitability of this transformation – as seen from the inside.

Its journey begins with uncertainty. Beyond the proven, essential benefits, the exact outcomes are difficult to predict, and the physical consequences can be surprising. We hope more species will return to us. That the flora will diversify further. That insect life will proliferate. That carbon will be sequestered and downstream flooding mitigated. This uncertainty can be heightened, too, by vehement objection from those with vested interests in the old regime.

There remains, nevertheless, our basic and perhaps selfish human desire to see the land return to a semblance of its former glory – bringing benefits to ecosystems whose implications reach far beyond the purely aesthetic. Yet the aesthetics are still something to behold and deeply cherish – a personal experience for us all. The sheer marvel of witnessing this slow transformation, with many glimpses already visible and so many more to come, can be overwhelming.

Finally, we can tentatively celebrate the results, and the growing anticipation that others will follow – indeed, many already are – in one of the most satisfying ways available to us of tackling the existential threat of the climate and biodiversity emergencies.