

Lisa Bielawa

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Note

Premiere: August 13, 2009 at The National Flute Association Annual Conference in New York. Commissioned by The National Flute Association, Inc.
Duration: 6'30"
Instrumentation: solo flute

It is always a special pleasure to write solo repertoire, since I do much performing as a solo vocalist and enjoy translating my own challenges and fascinations onto other instruments. While I was composing *Gargoyles* I was concurrently working up Luciano Berio's *Sequenza III* for voice. The unique challenges of this piece include the implementation of very rapidly shifting extreme moods that he indicates in the score. While coaching the piece with soprano Joan La Barbara, who worked on it with the composer himself, I learned that one of the time-honored ways of preparing this aspect of the piece is to collect bold images (postcards, clippings, etc.) to correspond with the moods, so that the performer can run a "slide show" of images in her mind while performing. This technique allows for execution of very rapid mood switches.

Many of the images I collected for my *Sequenza* preparation were postcards of gargoyles from the great cathedrals of France. These stone creatures exhibit such a variety of distinct moods, from their ancient perches far above the town squares! Using some of the same moods that Berio demands in his piece, and with the gargoyle images to guide me, I ended up writing a kind of tribute to Berio and to the tradition of performance that he showed us with his solo repertoire. Continuing in this spirit of playful expansion and cross-disciplinary exchange, I invite performers of *Gargoyles* to find their own images to guide them through the shifting moods in this piece.

– Lisa Bielawa

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