

***Lyle, Lyle, Crocodile* Program Information**

Performance Notes

Performance time: approximately 24 minutes.

Program Notes

Lyle, Lyle, Crocodile (2009) is a musical setting of one of my favorite books. (*LYLE, LYLE, CROCODILE* by Bernard Waber. Copyright © 1965 by Bernard Waber. Used by permission of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. All rights reserved.) I read the book many times to my three sons when they were very young. It is a terrific story that deals with the issue of prejudice, among other things. Lyle, a big green crocodile, is not wanted in the neighborhood. He frightens a neighbor's cat because of his size and unusual appearance, which immediately sets the cat's owner, Mr. Grumps, against Lyle. It becomes apparent that the only way Lyle can succeed with Mr. Grumps is through an act of heroism or some such extraordinary display. Fortunately Lyle triumphs, but only after a series of serendipitous circumstances and harrowing adventures.

Every major character has a musical theme prompted by their personality. Lyle the crocodile is friendly, helpful, athletic, and talented. Loretta the cat is nervous, distrustful, excitable, and easily frightened. Her owner Mr. Grumps is a department store executive who is excitable, snappy, and irritable. Lyle's old friend Hector P. Valenti, star of stage and screen, is a show off. Even the house on East 88th Street, where Lyle lives, has a musical theme. The house is one of a symmetrical row of brownstones, much like those in Boston's South End neighborhood.

The idea to compose a work for piano and narrator was suggested to me by my friend and former business colleague Dr. Daniel Goodman who, in addition to being a Ph.D. scientist, is a talented pianist who has staged many solo concerts at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology over the years. A father of youngsters himself, he delights in performing narrated works that appeal to children (as well as adults) such as Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf* and Poulenc's *The Story of Babar*. Dan is also a very creative and imaginative musician. I must acknowledge his many excellent suggestions that influenced this work as it progressed, in addition to thanking him for suggesting such a piece in the first place.

Lyle, Lyle, Crocodile is also available in versions for full orchestra or chamber orchestra and narrator. See www.tarrh.com for details.

John M. Tarrh