

# ***Lyle, Lyle, Crocodile***

**For Piano and Narrator**

**Music by John M. Tarrh**

**Words by Bernard Waber**

*LYLE, LYLE, CROCODILE* by Bernard Waber.

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***Meriam Hill Music***

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## Performance Notes

Performance time: approximately 24:20.

## 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 88<sup>th</sup> 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](http://www.tarrh.com) for details.

John M. Tarrh

Bernard Waber  
Rev. 9/01/09

# Lyle, Lyle, Crocodile

John M. Tarrh

**Allegro,  $\text{J} = 130$**

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This is the house. The house on East 88th Street. Mr. and Mrs. Primm and their son Joshua live in the house on East 88th Street. So does Lyle. Listen:

34 **Allegro,  $J = 130$**

**f** SWISH, SWASH,

36

9

37 **accel.** **6/8**

SPLASH, SWOOSH!

10

That's Lyle in the tub . . . Lyle the crocodile.

39 **Andante,  $J = 80$**

**mf**

**mp**

Lyle was very happy living with the Primm family. He was especially happy when he was being useful . . . like helping Joshua brush up on school work. But if Lyle was happy, he was making someone else unhappy; perfectly miserable in fact. That someone else was Loretta, Mr. Grumps' cat.

46 **Allegro,  $\text{♩} = 120$**

48

50

52

Now that you've met Lyle and Loretta, there's someone else I want to introduce.

54 **Adagio,  $\text{♩} = 88$**

That was Mr. Grumps, who lived just two houses away from the Primms. Whenever Mr. Grumps' cat caught even the slightest glimpse of Lyle,

59 **Adagio,  $\text{J} = 70$**

64 **Allegro,  $\text{J} = 130$**

rit.

Lyle wanted desperately to win Loretta over. He tried flashing his sweetest, most toothsome smile at her to show how really friendly he was. But this only frightened the distrustful animal even more.

69 **Larghetto,  $\text{J} = 70$**

72

In the end, Mr. Grumps, who was even more excitable than his cat, would burst from the house shaking an angry fist at Lyle.

78 **Allegro,  $\text{d} = 130$**

“Something will have to be done about

83

that crocodile,” he shouted.

85

Lyle fled to the safety of his own house.

To take his mind off his troubles with Loretta and Mr. Grumps, Lyle filled his days playing with Joshua and his friends. He loved being "it." He could skip double-dutch one hundred times without missing.

88 **Andante,  $\text{J.} = 80$**

accel.

94

It came as no particular surprise that Lyle could high-jump.

**Andante,  $\text{J.} = 80$**

100

103

106

But Loretta, who was just let out for an airing, was surprised by Lyle's jumping.

109 **Allegro,  $\text{J} = 130$**       **meno mosso**

She was terribly surprised.

115

Loretta was so surprised and so shaken, she fled to the nearest tree

119

and no amount of coaxing would bring her down.

(8)

121

(8)

Not until Mr. Grumps arrived to rescue and comfort her, would she consider coming down.

124 *Adagio*,  $\text{♪} = 88$

124 *Adagio*,  $\text{♪} = 88$

*p*

128 *mp* *mf*

132 *mf*

135 *tr.*

138 *rit.*

141 Allegro,  $\text{J} = 130$

**ff** "Something will have to be done about that crocodile," stormed Mr. Grumps. Now Mr. Grumps was

143

really furious. Now he knew he would be snappy, irritable and impossible to live with when he returned to

147

**Moderato,  $\text{J} = 120$**

**pp** For the next several days Mrs. Primm thought it best to keep Lyle close to her side.

his job in a big department store the following day.

152 vamp until ready

**mp**

155

**pp**

Together they fussed about the kitchen, preparing good things for the family to eat.

158

*mp*

160

*pp*

When the weather permitted, they took lunch to the park. They even took trips downtown.

163

*mf*

167

*pp*

There was much to see in the big city . . . and much to do. Mrs. Primm could spend hours

170

just browsing around antique shops. Lyle could spend hours watching building construction.

178 R.H. R.H. R.H. R.H. L.H. L.H. **pp** They both loved to ice-skate.

poco rit.

3/4

3/4

poco meno mosso,  $\text{quarter note} = 110$

180

*mf*

181

One day Mrs. Primm and Lyle went shopping in a big department store. Unfortunately for everyone, it turned out to be the very same store in which Mr. Grumps held an important position. And unfortunately, they were to hear from Mr. Grumps all too soon. For it was his voice that suddenly broke in over the loudspeaker to announce a sale in the pajama department.

189 **Andante,  $\text{J} = 92$**

Immediately, it was

192 **Allegro,  $\text{J} = 120$**

as if everyone in the store was in desperate need of pajamas. Separated from Mrs. Primm, Lyle was

194

swept along with the crowd.

196

As they neared the pajama department, Lyle thought he heard a familiar voice. "Lyle, Lyle," the voice called out. Lyle recognized the voice all right . . . and the face as well. The voice belonged to Hector P. Valenti, star of stage and screen.

Andante,  $\text{♩} = 76$

199

205

But what was Signor Valenti up to now? Well, for the moment it seemed, he was very busy selling pajamas.

The two were delighted to see each other once more, although Lyle remembered unhappily his days of traveling and performing with Signor Valenti.

210 Andante,  $\text{♩} = 76$

214

In another part of the store, Mrs. Primm searched for Lyle.

218 **Andante, ♩ = 80**

*mp* “Excuse me,” she said to the lady at the information booth, “have you

222  
*mp* seen a crocodile going past? He was wearing a red scarf.”

226  
*mp* “No,” answered the lady. “I have no information about a crocodile wearing a red scarf.”  
*mf* *p*

231 **poco più accel.**  
*mf* “Excuse me,” said Mrs. Primm to the sporting goods salesman as she started

235  
*mf* to get anxious, “have you by chance come across a crocodile? His name is Lyle.”

239

“Sorry, madam,” answered the salesman, “I have not come across any crocodiles named Lyle today.”

*mf*

244 **Andante,  $\text{♩} = 92$**

Mrs. Primm grew more and more upset. “Excuse me,” she said to a man

248

wearing a white carnation, “I have lost my crocodile and I don’t know what to do.”

252

Whatever the man answered, Mrs. Primm never heard it, for his voice was lost in a chorus of other

*mf*

258

voices shouting, “More, more!” Those voices belonged to the huge crowd of  
shoppers surrounding Hector P. Valenti and Lyle.

*f*

“More, more!” the surprised, but delighted shoppers called out, forgetting all about wanting or even needing pajamas. Mrs. Primm caught up with them just in time to hear still another voice, charged with fury, shout, “What is going on here?” This was Mr. Grumps. And when Mr. Grumps saw what was really going on his face turned red, blue and purple with rage. “Madam,” he gasped, “we do not permit crocodiles in this store you know. Remove him at once!! And you sir,” he said, pointing a daggerlike finger at Signor Valenti, “you sir, are dismissed!!”

307 Adagio,  $\text{J} = 70$ 

“Something will have to be done about that crocodile.” Those warning words of Mr. Grumps still rang in their ears as they said goodbye to Signor Valenti outside the store.

311 Largo,  $\text{J} = 40$ 

Mr. Grumps at last made good his threat to do something about “that crocodile.” The next day he appeared at the Primms’ door with papers authorizing Lyle to be committed to the city zoo. “The zoo!” Mrs. Primmm exclaimed miserably, “whatever would Lyle be doing in the zoo?” “He’ll be doing whatever it is normal crocodiles are supposed to be doing,” snapped Mr. Grumps who wasn’t being at all nice about it. The Primms examined the papers. They appeared to be in order. There was little they could do, at least for the moment, to prevent Mr. Grumps from putting Lyle in the zoo.

317 Andante,  $\text{J} = 90$ 

## 324

## 329

Lyle's first night was difficult indeed.

334 **Largo,  $\text{J} = 40$**

338

Not wanting to seem unsociable, he decided to join the other crocodiles who were cozily piled together.

342 **Largo,  $\text{J} = 60$**

Just when he thought he had gotten  
himself comfortable on top . . .

346

he awakened to find  
himself crushed to  
the very bottom.

Lyle's restlessness so annoyed the other crocodiles, they all just got up and stomped off in a huff.

351 **Moderato,  $\text{J} = 116$**

Lyle was very sad. He was happier  
during the day, when visitors came.

356

He amused everyone with his unusual tricks and before long was the biggest attraction at the zoo.

361 Andante,  $\text{♩} = 85$     accel.

367

372

380

387 **Moderato,  $J = 112$**

**p** **pp** *sim.*

Joshua and Mrs. Primm visited regularly, arms laden with games, toys and the Turkish caviar Lyle

393

so loved. Mrs. Primm did her best to smile and appear cheerful, but just couldn't hide her concern.

399

“Are you feeling all right dear?” she would ask. “Are you getting enough rest? Are you making

405

friends with the other crocodiles? Do the lions keep you awake at night? Is the floor too damp?

411

Do the flies pester you?”

Lyle shook his head yes or no,

417

depending on the question. He tried putting on a brave front, but Mrs. Primm knew very well he was

423

Andante,  $\text{♩} = 100$

unhappy and fought back her tears.

$p$

$pp$

430

One night a new keeper appeared at Lyle's cage.

437

poco accel.

$p$

$mf$

443

$6$

$8$

Surprise! Surprise! The new keeper turned out to be none other than Hector P. Valenti, star of stage and screen.

449 **Andante,  $\text{J} = 76$**

455

“Sh!” whispered Signor Valenti, “I have come to rescue you.”

460 **Andante,  $\text{J} = 76$**

rit.

Signor Valenti unlocked the door of the cage and an astonished Lyle was set free.

469 **Andante,  $\text{J} = 100$**

rit.

“You can’t go home again,” said Signor Valenti when they had put the zoo behind them. Signor Valenti was bursting with ideas. “We’ll put our old act together again,” he said. “We’ll fly to Australia. They’ll love us in Australia.” Lyle groaned. The very thought of never seeing the house on East 88th Street again was grim indeed and too much for him to endure.

475 **Andante,  $\text{J} = 90$**

480

Signor Valenti read his thoughts and decided Lyle should have one last look at the house on East 88th Street.

484

489

494

rit.

Approaching the now sleeping street,

500 **Allegro,  $\text{J} = 126$**     **accel.**                <img alt="3/8 time signature" data-bbox="17580 105 17610 125

A gasping, frightened Mr. Grumps and his cat were led to the safety of the street. Now the Primms and the entire neighborhood were awake and witness to Lyle's heroism. Mr. Grumps couldn't thank him enough. "Ladies and gentlemen," said Mr. Grumps to the crowd of onlookers,

522 **Andante, ♩ = 96**

522 **Andante, ♩ = 96**

"Lyle is the bravest, kindest, most wonderful crocodile in the whole, wide world. I would consider it a privilege and a pleasure to have him as our neighbor once more."  
 "Hooray!" shouted the Primms. "Hooray!" shouted the crowd.

528

Lyle moved back to the house on East 88th Street that very night.

534

rit.

543

Several days later, the Primms gave a farewell party for Signor Valenti, who was leaving to seek fortune and adventure in Australia. "Remember," said Mr. Grumps, speaking to Signor Valenti, "should you change your mind about leaving, a job in my store will always be yours just for the asking. We need people with your kind of talent and ability."

547 **Andante, ♩ = 80**

551

Everyone smiled happily . . . even Loretta.

556 **Andante, ♩ = 80**

560 **Allegro, ♩ = 130**

