



Berio's Sequenzas: Essays on Performance, Composition and Analysis

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Between 1958 and 2002, Luciano Berio wrote fourteen pieces entitled Sequenza, along with several versions of the same work for different instruments, revisions of the original pieces and also the parallel Chemins series, where one of the Sequenzas is used as the basis for a new composition on a larger scale. The Sequenza series is one of the most remarkable achievements of the late twentieth century - a collection of virtuoso pieces that explores the capabilities of a solo instrument and its player, making extreme technical demands of the performer whilst developing the musical vocabulary of the instrument in compositions so assured and so distinctive that each piece both initiates and potentially exhausts the repertoire of a new genre. The Sequenzas have significantly influenced the development of composition for solo instruments and voice, and there is no comparable series of works in the output of any other composer. Series of pieces tend to be linked by the instruments for which the composer writes, but this is a series in which the pieces are linked instead by the variety of instruments for which Berio composed. The varied approaches taken by the contributors in discussing the pieces demonstrate the richness of this repertoire and the many levels on which Berio and these landmark compositions can be considered. Contributions are arranged under three main headings: Performance Issues; Berio's Compositional Process and Aesthetics; and Analytical Approaches.

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Editorial Review

Review

'... contains much valuable, insightful commentary...' *Studies in Musical Theatre* '...the first serious contribution to the understanding of this very important part of Berio's compositional output...in addition to these specialist essays covering different aspects of confronting Berio's compositions and abounding in examples from the scores, statistical and graphical representation of the research results etc., the book offers an extensive bibliography on Berio and his work, listing of the editions of the Sequenza and the Chemins, a discography register and an index. As such, it surely represents a piece of inevitable literature for experts researching both Berio's work, and composition of the 20th century in general.' *International Review of the Sociology and Aesthetics of Music* '... a number of musicological fields - solo performance studies, later 20th-century aesthetics, issues of the work-concept - are all the richer for this stimulating volume.' *Tempo*

About the Author

Janet K. Halfyard is a senior lecturer at UCE Birmingham Conservatoire. Her research includes work on Luciano Berio, Cathy Berberian, extended vocal technique and performance practice issues in contemporary repertoire, and she is active as a performer with the contemporary music ensemble, decibel. Her publications also include work on film and television music: she is the author of Danny Elfman's *Batman: a film score guide* (2004) in the Scarecrow Press Film Score Guide series and has contributed to *European Film Music* (2006) in Ashgate's Popular and Folk Music series.

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