

***Sequenza III* (1966), Luciano Berio**

Sequenza III is one of an extended series of solo works composed throughout Berio's life, each of which exploits the technical and expressive possibilities of a different instrument - flute, harp, female voice, piano, trombone, viola, oboe, violin, clarinet, trumpet, guitar, bassoon, accordion, alto saxophone and double bass - to a high degree. Berio composed the vocal *Sequenza* for Cathy Berberian. For this work, he asked Markus Kutter for a text "Give me a few words for a woman to sing". The result is a brief text (beginning with the actual words of Berio's request) which can be read as a single sentence, but which the composer treats as the raw material of sound for all its phonetic possibilities. Consonants may be isolated into rapidly-repeated percussive passages; vowels can be isolated too, with an even wider range of expressive effect when combined with Berio's precise indications for whispered or spoken, sung or muted tones, and "noises" such as laughter, coughing or sighs. Occasionally individual words can be heard, but at no point is Kutter's text simply "sung".

<i>Give me</i>	<i>a few words</i>	<i>for a woman</i>
<i>to sing</i>	<i>a truth</i>	<i>allowing us</i>
<i>to build a house</i>	<i>without worrying</i>	<i>before night comes.</i>

Berio notates the rhythm spatially (closer elements move quickly, those spread out more slowly). There are fiftytwo "measures" in the piece, with each measure a unit of ten seconds. The pitch notation is on a staff (with no clef) or shown relatively with high, middle and low around a single line. Berio also specifies forty-four different emotional indications (i.e. coy, dreamy, giddy, noble, urgent, whining, etc.) to guide the singer's changing inflections. The resulting work gives the impression of being a spontaneous improvisation though it has actually been highly controlled by the composer.

— Lucy Shelton