



Conversation with Magic Stones

(after the sculpture by Barbara Hepworth)

For solo contrabass instrument and small ensemble

Clarinet in Bb

Nigel Morgan

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Conversations with Magic Stones

*(after the sculpture by
Barbara Hepworth)*

*For solo contrabass instrument
and small ensemble*

Nigel Morgan

This work was commissioned by Yorkshire Sculpture Park for the exhibitions celebrating the centenary of Dame Barbara Hepworth in 2003. As a piece for solo double bass it forms part of a 25 minute concert work titled *Music for Sculptures*. It was first performed in this solo version by David Langstroth of the BBC National Orchestra of Wales at Yorkshire Sculpture Park on June 14 2003.

The music has been written in such a way that it can be played effectively by any contrabass instrument with or without a small ensemble. The compass and *tessitura* of the solo part makes this possible. The work is presented here for double bass, but versions for electric bass guitar, tuba, and contra-bassoon are available.

The ensemble version is scored for:

Solo Contrabass Instrument

Flute
Oboe
Clarinet in Bb
Trumpet in Bb
Bass Trombone

All markings of phrasing, dynamics, tempo and articulations should be considered as initial guides, no more.

Conversation with Magic Stones is one of a number of works by Nigel Morgan that use source material from Nicholas Slonimsky's *Thesaurus of Scales and Melodic Patterns* (1947), a collection of several thousand examples much used by jazz musicians and composers. John Coltrane is said to have learnt them all! John Adams recently celebrated their use in his orchestral work *Slonimsky's Earbox*. *Conversation* employs patterns 1 to 5: the tritone progression (an equal division of the octave into two parts) with an interpolation of one note.

More information about *Music for Sculptures* can be seen at www.nigel-morgan.co.uk

*The work is dedicated to David and Tasha
Langstroth*

Conversation with Magic Stones

A few black and green yews
are where these forms choose,
for privacy or camouflage,
to stage their large self-absorption.

Among them
no bend.
No stoop.
I turn.
The bland
smile of
innuendo
glances
off my back.
Verdigris
mouths
grimace.

But oblique is the glance of the magic stones.
No horizontals but a line of obedient water
where yew needles ride, idle in the shallow
bronze crater in a warm bronze plain.
One stone bends an avian eye
but the other, with lowered gaze,
exposes its receptivity,
its vulnerable fontanelle.

A figure
confronts
a stone.
Severe
Verdigris
mouth.
Smooth
face, hard.

The stone deflects all words,
with every plane, line and angle
points to escape routes.
I stand where the stones
overlap in my sight
Each seems a child
with an incalculable centre.

There is no end to the secrets
they slip each other.

Conversation with Magic Stones

Clarinet in Bb

with purpose ♩ = 88

Db.

f

3

mf

5

f

7

A cool ♩ = 60

G.P.

mf

11

mp *mf* *mf*

15

mf *mp* *cresc...* *mf*

19

Db.

B

mf *mp* *mf*

23

Db.

f *f* *cresc...* *mf*

28

mp *mf*

33 **C** *with energy* ♩ = 90
Db.

f sempre *f* *mf*

38

f > *mf* *mf* *p* *mp* *mf* < *f*

42

f *mp* *p* *mp*

46

mf < *f* *f* Db.

50

f > *mf* *mp* *mf* > *p* *mp*

54 **D**

mf > *mp* *mf* *f*

58

mp > *p* *mp* *mf*

62 **E** *cool but with freedom* ♩ = 58
Db.

mp 3 3 3 3

66 *mf* *f* *> mf* *mp* *mf* *f*

70 Db. *mf* *mp* *mp*

74 *accelerando e cresc.* **F** *a tempo* Db. *f* *mf* 3 3 3 3

78 Db. *mp* *mf* *f* *mf* 5 *f* *> mf*

82 **G** *with determination* ♩ = 56 *mf* *mp* *p* *mf*

86 *brighter (less determined)* *mf* *mp* *mp*

89 *mp* *p* *mf* *f* *mf* *f*

92 **H** *more determined* *mf* *restrained* *mp*

94 *rallentando* *mf* G.P.