

Georgia College Department of Music

Guest Artist Recital



Reacting to the Landscape: Music by Women Composers

Jennifer Piazza-Pick, Soprano
Natalie Groom, Clarinet

Monday, Jan. 23, 2023, 7:30 P.M.

Max Noah Recital Hall

and Live Streamed on [facebook.com/GCMusicDepartment](https://www.facebook.com/GCMusicDepartment)



Program

Eve's Diary (2019)*	Cherise Leiter (b. 1972)
Letter from Beirut (2021)*	Jennifer Stevenson (b. 1977)
Meadow Song (2013)	Iris Szeghy (b. 1956)
The Green Child (2020)*	Ashi Day (b. 1982)
Musical Invective (2022)* I. Beethoven II. Debussy III. Webern IV. L. Boulanger V. Gershwin	Jennifer Stevenson (b. 1977)
Scat 2 (1984)	Victoria Bond (b. 1945)

**Indicates a Whistling Hens commission*

Biographies

Whistling Hens was founded by soprano Jennifer Piazza-Pick and clarinetist Natalie Groom to celebrate and advance the artistic accomplishments of women through an ensemble performing and commissioning music by women composers. Inspired by a quote from a male music critic who said of Lili Boulanger, "women composers are at best whistling hens," the Whistling Hens duo was hatched. Since its founding in 2018, Whistling Hens has commissioned eight works and six transcriptions and has premiered fifteen compositions.

Whistling Hens has noticed that in society, and even among classical musicians, it is rare that anyone can think of more than a handful of women composers; the Hens seek to change this through targeted programming, educational outreach, and commissions. This work invites listeners to reflect on the impact male privilege has had on traditional music programming, question the status quo of gender inequality in the classical music community, and create a financially and artistically equitable future for women in music.

A decorated and in-demand ensemble, Whistling Hens has performed at over fifteen conferences and festivals and was the Ensemble in Residence for the Darkwater Womxn in Music Festival in 2021. In 2022, the Hens recorded their debut album (releasing fall 2022), a collection of nine world premiere recordings, five of which are commissions. Get in touch with the Hens at www.whistlinghens.com.

Dr. Natalie Groom is the clarinet professor at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County and the Manager of Advancement Operations and Analytics at Washington Performing Arts, a DC arts presenting nonprofit. She recently finished her tenure as an Artist in Residence at Collington Retirement Community where she responded to the pandemic with a virtual concert series that brought essential programming to isolated seniors. Prior to this role, she was an audio engineer, producer, and manager for virtual and live programs at Arts Laureate, a Baltimore-based classical music recording company. Learn more at www.nataliegroom.com.

Praised for singing with “passion and emotional depth” (*Richmond Times-Dispatch*), soprano **Jennifer Piazza-Pick** has performed with the Nationaltheater Mannheim in Germany as well as with US military bands in Belarus, Latvia, and Lithuania. The winner of Hawaii Public Radio’s art song contest, Dr. Piazza-Pick has been a finalist for the American Prize in the women’s art song division, and the winner of the George Cortes Award for Classical Singing by the Artist Foundation of San Antonio. Her work has been featured on NPR stations and the TV show *Virginia Currents*. Jennifer’s musical curiosity has led to research on women composers, which has been presented at festivals and in concert series across the country. Dr. Piazza-Pick is Assistant Professor of Music at Queens University of Charlotte.

Program Notes

Eve’s Diary (2019) uses as its text the first day of Mark Twain’s work “Eve’s Diary.” Eve is one day old and exploring her new world. Mark Twain’s Eve is a joyous, courageous, exuberant, curious, innocent, and adventurous woman thoroughly interested and involved in the new macrocosm of which she is a part. The work is sectional as Eve moves through her discoveries, beginning with her own existence, the existence of the world around her (represented by the clarinet), and culminating in her discovery of the ‘other’ experiment - who is not quite as curious and brave as she is...


Letter from Beirut (2021) was a finalist in the Composition Competition at the Darkwater Festival in 2021, where it was premiered by Whistling Hens. Poet Lory Bedikian writes a poetic letter informed by her experience as a daughter of immigrants. Stevenson combines the traditional Armenian lullaby “Oror in Pahlahs” with duduk inspired ornamentation. The clarinetist is encouraged to use vibrato, “at times wide/fast...” The ending in the clarinet should sound improvised.

Meadow Song (2013) features a variety of extended techniques for both instruments, including Sprechstimme, flutter tonguing, crying, and air tone. The two instruments work in duet with no text until the end, where one hears the Slovak hay-harvesting song. Sung in the Eastern Slovakia dialect, the text is: She raked, raked, raked nothing together/ She broke the rake out of great sorrow.

The Green Child (2020) is an adaptation of the fairy tale *The Green She-Devil* by Marcel Schwob from a collection of translated French decadent fairy tales called *Fairy Tales for the Disillusioned*. This is the legend of the green children of Woolpit in which a girl from a rural village finds a green child in the woods when she's out with her woodcutter father. The family takes the green girl in. The other villagers are suspicious of her. The green child and the daughter are very close. When the daughter is older, her family, out of need, decides to put her into domestic service for a rich family. The girl is devastated, and the day before she is to leave, she is up all night, inconsolable. The green girl finds her, takes her hand, and leads her out into the freedom and wild of the woods. In this adaptation, the clarinet represents the green child, the character who does not use spoken language. The green child and the daughter share a bond of saving each other and also present two sides of inner life - the side that needs community and society, and the side that is wild and never fully tameable. It touches on themes of community, abandonment, individuality, and the boundless resilience of women and girls.

There are many great composers we all revere. We've heard the three Bs - Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms - and some of the most famous and programmed composers of the world. But fame does not equal popularity, and critics of the day had many invective things to say about these artists. Inspired by the male critic who also inspired the namesake of Whistling Hens, *Musical Invective* (2022) is a multi-movement collection of scathing reviews meant to amuse and bemuse audience members and music lovers by recounting their biting words in a vignette of the style of each composer. This commission was sponsored by Mr. Wesley Green of Tucson, Arizona.

Originally written for soprano and trumpet, *Scat 2* was premiered in 1985 in New York City. In this jazz-influenced work, the singer is instructed to "sing nonsense syllables as a text which can be freely invented." The use of scat requires the combination of classical and jazz techniques for the singer. Although all of the music is written out in traditional notation, there is a feeling of improvisation in both the voice and the clarinet in this sassy jazz-meets-burlesque textless bop that is sure to get toes tapping.

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Faculty Recital
Andrew Sehmman,
French horn
Lev Ryabinin, piano
Tuesday, Jan. 24, 7:30 p.m.
Max Noah Recital Hall and
Live Streamed on FB

Guest Artist Recital
Vimadean Duo Concert
(Violin and Percussion)
Thursday, Jan. 26, 7:30 p.m.
Max Noah Recital Hall

Faculty Recital
Jimmy Helms
Original Compositions
Wednesday, Feb. 8, 7:30 p.m.
Max Noah Recital Hall and
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