

GCSU Department of Music

Faculty Chamber Recital

Voice of the Whale

Rebecca Cooke, clarinet

Laurie Peebles, flute

Steven Taylor, cello

Hue Jang, piano

Tuesday, September 2, 2025, 7:30 p.m.

Max Noah Recital Hall

and live streamed on facebook.com/GCMusicDepartment



Program

Piano Trio in B-flat major, Op. 11 (1797)

Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770–1827)

- I. Allegro con brio
- II. Adagio
- III. Tema con variazioni


Rebecca Cooke, clarinet
Steven Taylor, cello
Hue Jang, piano

Vox Balaenae for three Masked Players (1971)

George Crumb
(1929–2022)

Vocalise (... for the beginning of time)
Variations on Sea-Time [Sea Theme]
Archeozoic [Var I]
Proterozoic [Var II]
Paleozoic [Var III]
Mesozoic [Var IV]
Cenozoic [Var V]
Sea Nocturne (... for the end of time)

Laurie Peebles, flute
Steven Taylor, cello
Hue Jang, piano

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Program Notes

Ludwig van Beethoven's Opus 11 piano trio was composed in 1797 in Vienna. Often called the "Gassenhauer" Trio, in reference to the popularity of the tune used in the theme and variations movement, this trio is one of several chamber works Beethoven wrote using woodwind instruments during his Bonn years and his first few years in Vienna. The theme of the last movement, from Joseph Weigl's opera *L'Amor marinaro*, is said to have been so popular that people could be heard singing it in the streets of Vienna at the time.

There is an amusing story about a competition between Beethoven and Daniel Steibelt, a famous virtuoso pianist/composer, relating to this music. Beethoven and Steibelt agreed to a duel of sorts involving their performance and improvisation skills. Part of the competition involved each of them improvising specifically on music by the other. After Steibelt impressed the group by playing his own variations on *L'Amor marinaro*, Beethoven took a cello part from one of Steibelt's chamber works, placed the music upside down on his music stand, and played the music in retrograde, followed by variations that caused the crowd to proclaim Beethoven the obvious winner of the competition. Steibelt was so enraged at the outcome of these proceedings that he told his associates that he never wanted to see Beethoven again or even hear his name mentioned.

Born in Charleston, West Virginia in 1929, George Crumb's music has become well known for pushing the limits of the instruments involved as well as musical concepts. Crumb wrote in his introductory notes to *Vox Balaenae* that he was inspired by recordings of the singing of humpback whales, which he heard in 1969. *Vox Balaenae* was finished and premiered in New York City in 1971. It is important to note that though Crumb was inspired by humpback whale singing, this piece is by no means an attempt to merely imitate those sounds, but an exploration of the mood created by the experience. With its use of geologic epochs as movements, this work not only celebrates the whale's existence through time, but also the endurance of all life on earth.

Below are more detailed remarks by George Crumb on the musical ideas in *Vox Balaenae*:

"The form of *Voice of the Whale* is a simple three-part design, consisting of a prologue, a set of variations named after the geological eras, and an epilogue.

"The opening vocalise, marked in the score, 'Wildly fantastic, grotesque,' is a kind of cadenza for the flutist, who simultaneously plays his or her instrument and sings into it. This combination of instrumental and vocal sound produces an eerie, surreal timbre, not unlike the sounds of the humpbacked whale. The conclusion of the cadenza is announced by a parody of the opening measures of Strauss's *Also Sprach Zarathustra* [also used in the film 2001]. The sea theme, marked in the score, 'Solemn, with calm majesty,' is presented by the cello in harmonics, accompanied by dark fateful chords of strummed piano strings.

"The following sequence of variations begins with the haunting sea gull cries of the Archeozoic era, marked, 'Timeless, inchoate,' and, gradually increasing in intensity, reaches a strident climax in the Cenozoic era, marked, 'Dramatic, with a feeling of destiny.' The emergence of man in the Cenozoic era is symbolized by a restatement of the *Zarathustra* reference.

"The concluding *Sea Nocturne*, marked, 'Serene, pure, transfigured,' is an elaboration of the sea theme. The piece is couched in the luminous tonality of B major, and there are shimmering sounds of antique cymbals played alternately by the cellist and flutist. In composing the *Sea Nocturne* I wanted to suggest a larger rhythm of nature and a sense of suspension in time. The concluding gesture of the work is a gradually dying series of repetitions of a ten-note figure. In concert performance the last figure is to be played in pantomime to suggest a diminuendo beyond the threshold of hearing."

Biographies

[Rebecca Cooke bio.pdf](#)



[Steven Taylor updated bio \(1\) 0.pdf](#)



[Laurie Peebles updated bio.pdf](#)



[Hue Jang updated bio.pdf](#)



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Faculty Recital: Allen Duo

Musings

Elise Naber-Allen, flute
Andrew J. Allen, saxophone
Lev Ryabinin, piano
Thursday, Sept. 4, 7:30 pm
Max Noah Recital Hall
and live streamed on FB

Guest Artist Recital

Beethoven's Hammerklavier

Francisco Silva, piano
Tuesday, Sept. 9, 7:30 p.m.
Max Noah Recital Hall
and live streamed on FB

Jazz at the Magnolia (ticketed event)

Use QR Code for tickets or

<https://www.milledgevillealliedarts.com/event-details/jazz-at-the-magnolia-3>

Ralph Salman, guest artist
Don Parker, director
Saturday, Sept. 13, 7:30 p.m.
Magnolia Ballroom



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