



VOX

Heare Ensemble

George Crumb
VOX BALAENAE

1. Vocalise (...for the beginning of time) 4:44
2. Variations on Sea-Time (Sea Theme) 1:51
3. Archeozoic (Variation I) 1:21
4. Proterozoic (Variation II) 2:42
5. Paleozoic (Variation III) 1:10
6. Mesozoic (Variation IV) 1:25
7. Cenozoic (Variation V) 2:16
8. Sea Nocturne (...for the end of time) 6:33

Narong Prangcharoen
BENCHARONG

9. Red 1:04
10. Blue 1:58
11. Yellow 1:50
12. White 1:49
13. Black 1:16

Stacy Garrop

14. SILVER DAGGER 5:06

Carter Pann
MELODIES FOR ROBERT

15. I. Sing 2:47
16. II. Listen 6:49

— 44:43 —

Heare Ensemble
Jennie Oh Brown, flutes
Jennifer Blyth, piano
Kurt Fowler, cello



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VOX BALAENAE (VOICE OF THE WHALE) (1971)

George Crumb (b. 1929)

georgecrumb.net

George Crumb's revolutionary work *Vox Balaenae* "Voice of the Whale" for Three Masked Players (electric flute, electric cello, and electric piano) remains a prescient statement about humanity's destructive impact on the pristine beauty of the natural world. The piece was written as Crumb responded to a recording made by marine biologists in the 1960s showing the communicative power and complexity of whale songs. Crumb's theatrics include blue lighting to immerse the audience into a concert experience that mimics the depths of the ocean. The masked performers are intentionally and symbolically dehumanized to allow the music and hence nature's beauty to emerge. Crumb redefines how each instrument is played to mimic the songs and motion of whales, the call of seagulls, the echoes of the Appalachian Mountains, and more.

Crumb's allusions to world music and contrasting use of the recognizable opening theme of Richard Strauss' majestic *Also Sprach Zarathustra*, a piece he admires, provide additional commentary embracing the earth's many diverse cultures. In Crumb's sonic world, the cello becomes an Indian Sitar, and the sound of the flute is manipulated to be "wildly fantastic; grotesque". Crumb's references to *Also Sprach* take on various guises throughout the piece, until its delicate and fading closing appearance in the final movement "Sea-Nocturne (...for the end of time)".

- Jennie Oh Brown



BENCHARONG (2002)

Narong Prangcharoen (b. 1973)

narongmusic.com

The Thai word *Bencharong*, which describes the decoration of Thai porcelain, means "five colored" which consisted of Red, Blue, Yellow, White, and Black. These were made in China with Thai designs drawn by the aristocrats specifically for 18th and 19th century Ayutthaya and Bangkok royal courts. Bencharong's most distinctive feature was the complexity and regularity of the five-colored design depicting mythological creatures such as angels and heavenly maidens, naturalized and stylized flowers and animals, particularly birds and deer.

In this composition, I attempted to compose five short pieces representing the character of each color. Each movement has a different set of notes, feeling, and distinctive sound. My experiment about this piece is how the sounds are involved with audience emotion. I use the variety of sounds to remind the audience about the colors and the feeling of each individual color. Furthermore, I also tried to dovetail the sound of each movement to connect to the next smoothly but still have the distinctive sound of its color as happens in the Bencharong porcelain.

- Narong Prangcharoen



SILVER DAGGER (2010)

Stacy Garrop (b. 1969)

garrop.com

In 1994, I heard for the first time an Appalachian folk song called *Silver Dagger* at a folk festival. The simplicity of the melody joined with a cautionary love tale enthralled me, and I spent the next several years researching the song. What emerged from my research were dozens of variants of the song, both in terms of text as well as melody and title. The variants that I discovered could be grouped more or less under three different titles: *Silver Dagger*, *Drowsy Sleeper*, and *Katie Dear*. All of these versions revolve around the same Romeo and Juliet premise: a boy asks a girl for her parents' consent to marry. The story has various endings: the parents won't give approval, so the girl and boy each end their lives with a silver dagger; the girl turns the boy down and sends him away to find another love; the girl forsakes her parents and runs away with the boy; and so on. In my trio, I incorporate two complete versions of the folk song, one of *Katie Dear* and one of *Silver Dagger*, as well as motives from a variant of *Drowsy Sleeper*.

- Stacy Garrop



MELODIES FOR ROBERT (2017)

Carter Pann (b. 1972)

carterpann.com

In contrast to George Crumb's *Vox Balaenae*, which contemplates the absence of man at large (nature dehumanized), Carter Pann's *Melodies for Robert* contemplates an individual's life of courage and love — you can even hear bells tolling and spirits rising. It was written in memory of Robert Vincent Jones and consists of two movements titled "Sing," and "Listen." Despite a promising career as a flutist, Dr. Jones became an American war hero and pursued a life in the Chicago area as a physician and pilot, always maintaining his love of music.

The work contains rich harmonies, soaring melodies, and unexpected jazz twists, but beyond the musical elements, it evokes incredible depth of soul. Like so much of Pann's music, this work paints the heart of the American landscape. The work was commissioned by SDG Music Foundation and premiered by the Heare Ensemble.

- Kurt Fowler and Jennifer Blyth

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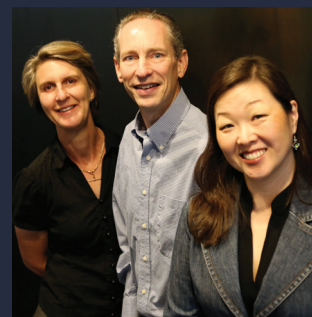
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