

12-2-1987

## Currents

Department of Music, University of Richmond

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarship.richmond.edu/all-music-programs>

 Part of the [Music Performance Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Department of Music, University of Richmond, "Currents" (1987). *Music Department Concert Programs*. 782.  
<https://scholarship.richmond.edu/all-music-programs/782>

This Program is brought to you for free and open access by the Music at UR Scholarship Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Music Department Concert Programs by an authorized administrator of UR Scholarship Repository. For more information, please contact [scholarshiprepository@richmond.edu](mailto:scholarshiprepository@richmond.edu).

THE UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC  
PRESENTS

CURRENTS

THE ENSEMBLE FOR NEW MUSIC AT THE UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND

Fred Cohen, Artistic Director

North Court Recital Hall

December 2, 1987  
8:15 P. M.

.....  
**Voice of the Whale** (1971)

George Crumb  
(b. 1929)

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

Patricia Werrell *flute*  
Hope Erb *piano*  
Jacqueline Spears *cello*

**Music for Solo Cello** (1982)

Allan Blank  
(b. 1925)

William Comita *cello*

**Trio** (1987)

Richard Becker  
(b. 1942)

I. Chorale

III. Song of the Mourning Dove

Patricia Werrell *flute*  
David Neithamer *clarinet*  
Lynda Edwards *bassoon*

.....INTERMISSION.....

**Sonata a Tre (1982)**

Karel Husa  
(b. 1921)

- I. With intensity
- II. With sensitivity
- III. Very fast

David Neithamer *clarinet*  
Robert Murray *violin*  
Richard Becker *piano*

**Octet for Winds (1922-23)**

Igor Stravinsky  
(1882-1971)

- I. Sinfonia
- II. Tema con Variazioni
- III. Finale

Julie Ferrigno *flute*  
Charles West *clarinet*  
Lynda Edwards, William Sniffen *bassoons*  
Michael Davison, Jonathan Mela *trumpets*  
Pamela Barton, Courteney Reed *trombones*  
Fred Cohen *conductor*

**Upcoming events:**

University of Richmond Orchestra, Fred Cohen conductor  
Camp Theater    December 8                    8:15 P. M.

## PROGRAM NOTES

### **Voice of the Whale**

The work was inspired by the singing of the humpback whale, a tape recording of which I had heard two or three years [before embarking on the composition of this work]. Each of the three performers is required to wear a black half-mask (or visor mask). The masks, by effacing the sense of human projection, are intended to represent, symbolically, the powerful impersonal forces of nature (i.e. nature dehumanized).

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

The opening *Vocalise* is a kind of cadenza for the flutist, who simultaneously plays his instrument and sings into it. This combination of instrumental and vocal sound produces an eerie, surreal timbre, not unlike the sounds of the humpback whale. The conclusion of the cadenza is announced by a parody of the opening measures of Strauss' *Also Sprach Zarathustra*.

The *Sea-Theme* 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* and, gradually increasing in intensity, reaches a strident climax in the *Cenozoic*. The emergence of man in the Cenozoic era is symbolized by a restatement of the *Zarathustra* reference.

The concluding *Sea-Nocturne* 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. 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 10-note figure. In concert performance, the last figure is to be played "in pantomime" (to suggest a *diminuendo* beyond the threshold of hearing!).

notes by the composer

George Crumb teaches music composition at the University of Pennsylvania. He was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in Music in 1968.

### **Music for Solo Cello**

*Music for Solo Cello* was conceived as a one-movement dramatic piece in two sections (slow, fast), with a return of the opening material at the close. The basic technical approach was to explore and expand from the primary statement into the various subdivisions of the work.

notes by the composer

Allan Blank is Professor of Composition at Virginia Commonwealth University. Among his many awards are the First Prize in the prestigious George Eastman Competition, and commissions in 1979 and 1987 from the Virginia Music Teachers Association.

### **Trio**

Trio for flute, B-flat clarinet, and bassoon was composed from February to October, 1987. It is in three movements: I. Chorale, II. Canticles, III. Song of the Mourning Dove.

Chorale is austere in mood and form. The entire Trio is based on material loosely derived from its first phrases. Its title refers to the fact that it was inspired in some respects by early Lutheran music.

Song of the Mourning Dove never quotes the actual sound of the bird which inspired it. Its continuously flowing accompaniment is sometimes above and sometimes below the melody. It could be argued that the tune, its drone accompaniment, and other aspects of the movement make it sound like a minimalist composition. But there was no conscious effort to write in that particular style.

notes by the composer

Richard Becker teaches at the University of Richmond. Mr. Becker has given numerous piano recitals at locations including Alice Tully Hall in New York and the National Gallery in Washington. He has appeared as soloist with symphony orchestras, including the Richmond Symphony.

## Sonata a Tre

Karel Husa has been called "one of the most interestingly human--and humane--musical minds in this country's recent history." Born in Prague, Husa came to America in 1954 at the invitation of Cornell University, where he remains as Professor of Composition. The recipient of many awards, Husa received the Pulitzer Prize in 1969; his *Music for Prague, 1968* is perhaps the most frequently performed work of twentieth century music, having been performed over 5,000 times around the world.

## Octet for Winds

The *Octet* began with a dream. I found myself (in my dream state) in a small room surrounded by a small number of instrumentalists who were playing some very agreeable music. I did not recognize the music they played, and I could not recall any of it the next day, but I do remember my curiosity--in the dream--to know how many the musicians were. I remember, too, that after I had counted them to the number eight, I looked again and saw that they were playing bassoons, trombones, trumpets, a flute, and a clarinet. I awoke from this little dream concert in a state of delight, and the next morning I began to compose the *Octet*--a piece I had not so much as thought of the day before (though I had wanted for some time to write a chamber ensemble piece--not incidental music like *L'Histoire du Soldat*, but an instrumental sonata).

The *Octet* was quickly composed (in 1922). The first movement came first, and then the waltz in the second movement. The theme of the beginning of the second movement was derived from the waltz. As soon as I had discovered it, I recognized it as an ideal theme for variations. I then wrote the "ribbon of scales" variation as a prelude introduction to each of the other variations. The final variation, the fugato, is the culmination of everything I had attempted to do in the first movement, and it is certainly the most interesting episode in the whole *Octet*....

I conducted the first performance of the *Octet* myself, and I was extremely nervous about doing it: it was the first work of mine I did introduce myself. The stage of the Paris Opera seemed a large frame for only eight instruments, but we were set off by a wall of screens, and the piece sounded well.

from *Conversations with Stravinsky*, Vol. IV.

### Upcoming CURRENTS concerts:

February 17, 1988, 8:15 P. M., North Court Recital Hall

Guest composer: Joel Feigin

March 30, 1988, 8:15 P. M., North Court Recital Hall

Guest soprano: Christine Schadeberg