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Kinetic by Kinetic Ensemble

Our debut album *Kinetic* features four new works recently commissioned and premiered by the ensemble that collectively explore the deep connections between musical sound and the natural world. These works are rich with influence and imagery, featuring depictions ranging from the ecological soundscapes

of the Amazon rainforest to the dance-like patterns of birds in flight; from the terror of living through a winter storm to the crashing of waves in the Pacific Ocean. The four extraordinary composers whose works inspired this album—Patrick Harlin, Paul Novak, Nicky Sohn, and Daniel Temkin—breathe new

life into the medium of the string ensemble through music that is dynamic, nuanced, and innovative. We are honored to have collaborated so closely with them in bringing these works into the world, and are thrilled to share them more broadly through this album.



The Wilderness Anthology

Patrick Harlin

- 1 I. Reverence/Dusk
- 2 II. Jungle Disco
- 3 III. Dawn Chorus
- 4 IV. Static
- 5 V. Extraordinary Machine
- 6 VI. Nightscape
- 7 VII. Dawn/Reverence

- 8 A String Quartet is like a Flock of Birds
Paul Novak

- 9 What Happens if Pipes Burst?
Nicky Sohn

Ocean's Call for String Orchestra

Daniel Temkin

- 10 I. Hanging Cliffs, Rising Mist
- 11 II. The Bitter Salt of the Sea
- 12 III. Lullaby Waves

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Produced by Brad Sayles and Natalie Lin Douglas. Recording Engineers Brad Sayles and Giancarlo Minotti. Edited, Mixed, and Mastered by Brad Sayles at Crescendo Recording, Houston, Texas.

Tracks 1-9 were recorded at Stude Concert Hall, Houston Texas, October 10-13, 2022. Tracks 10-12 were recorded at Chapelwood United Methodist Church, Houston Texas, May 25, 2022.

Art Direction by FÖDA™
Photography by Jett Butler

The Wilderness Anthology was composed by Patrick Harlin. **What Happens if Pipes Burst?** was composed by Nicky Sohn. Both were performed by violinists Natalie Lin Douglas, Mary Grace Johnson, Samuel Park, Jacob Schafer, Giancarlo Latta,

Carter Coleman, Cindy Ahn, and Kami Ghavi-Helm; violists Tonya Burton, Aria Cheregosha, and Molly Wise; cellists David Olson, Danbe Lee, and Patricia Ryan; and bassists Austin Lewellen and Ryan Avila.

A String Quartet is like a Flock of Birds was composed by Paul Novak and performed by violinists Jacob Schafer and Samuel Park; violist Tonya Burton; and cellist Patricia Ryan. **Ocean's Call** was composed by Daniel Temkin and performed by violinists Natalie Lin

Douglas, Jacob Schafer, Matthew Lammers, Cindy Ahn, Heemin Choi, Mary Grace Johnson, Samuel Park, and Chisa Kodaka; violists Tonya Burton, Sergein Yap, and Sebastian Stefanovic; cellists David Olson, Bree Ahern, and Patricia Ryan; and bassists Ryan Avila and Jesse Fischer.



From the composer Patrick Harlin—

The Wilderness Anthology is a work for string orchestra and pre-recorded audio soundscapes from some of the most remote and imperiled ecosystems on Earth, including The Book Cliffs and portions of the Amazon. Though almost entirely overlooked in the field of sustainability, soundscapes are a critical component of an ecosystem. They are a potential indicator of biodiversity, a valuable tool in predator and

prey dynamics, and a clear signal in frequently visually cluttered or camouflaged landscapes. Through a combination of habitat loss, species decline, ecological destruction, and resource extraction, soundscapes are becoming less apparent and acoustically diverse. Human generated noise masks sound from biological and geographic sources, while technology increasingly insulates humans inside of an

artificial sound environment. It is not the presence but the absence of noise that sounds the alarm. By combining ecological soundscapes with musical performance, *The Wilderness Anthology* seeks to revisit our innate connection to natural soundscapes and promote awareness and sensitivity for our sonic environments.



From the composer Paul Novak—

A String Quartet is like a Flock of Birds grapples with the sense of isolation that so many musicians felt during the pandemic. As I was writing it, I was thinking a lot recently about togetherness and apartness; how while we grieve and reckon with the collective trauma of the pandemic we've been isolated from one another, but at the same time we're still struggling to find new ways to connect. To me,

a string quartet epitomizes these ideas: it's a coming together of disparate things, fusing solo virtuosity with a communal, receptive way of playing. All four parts are equal, and each player has to be both a follower and a leader. A string quartet is like a flock of birds is structured in 9 interlocking movements, with slow, reflective meditations alternating with fast, rhythmic dances. The quartet explores

ideas of togetherness: the 4 parts fit together like a puzzle, and only when they are perfectly enmeshed do melodies emerge. Each section in the piece is about the players finding each other: sometimes overlapping, sometimes drifting apart into chaotic motion, sometimes circling around each other like birds in flight.



From the composer Nicky Sohn—

Climate change is a global issue. In a sinister way, this means it is impersonal, detached from the everyday life of the city dweller, coming to light only when it appears on a screen. In February 2021, this changed for the people of Houston. Hit with a freeze that disabled the power grid for much of the city, some 4.5 million

homes and businesses lost power for days. Without the basic infrastructure to combat such conditions, people froze in their homes. Lives were lost. And like that, the climate crisis had at last found itself on my own doorstep. Everything seemed frozen over: travel plans, grocery lists, roads, rendezvous. For the first time in my

fortunate life, my access to basic needs were cut off. **What Happens if the Pipes Burst?** was my way of questioning my personal safety during the Houston freeze, but it is also a question of the many freezes that are to come if we continue to abuse the environments in which we live.



From the composer Daniel Temkin—

At age sixteen, I drove up California's "Pacific Coast Highway" for the first time. The central coast was mesmerizing, and its steep, jagged cliffs and panoramic landscapes were like nothing I'd ever seen. The Pacific Ocean seemed to have its own aura, a rugged energy calling out to me. A decade later, I had moved to California, and the coastal landscapes became natural inspiration for **Ocean's Call**. The first movement, "Hanging

Cliffs, Rising Mist," contrasts airy harmonics in the upper strings, with a solo cello singing out in its lowest range, an acoustic division representing physical distance between steep, foggy, cliff sides and stark rocks and ocean far down below. The second movement, "The Bitter Salt of the Sea," begins with quiet ocean sounds tapped and bowed on the instrument bodies. As the music builds, different rhythmic currents

take over, eventually building into a stormy tide and a vigorous climax where crashing waves pass through the ensemble. The final movement, "Lullaby Waves," considers the ocean at its most tranquil. Alternating between spacious chorales and simple duets, this understated movement ponders love, suggesting it has a certain pure, eternal quality, like that of gentle ocean waves which ebb on throughout time.



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