THE BIRD-WHILE
a Concerto for Solo Flute, Clarinet in B♭, Violin, and Cello, and Symphonic Winds
Commissioned by Hub New Music

by

Gala Flagello

A composition submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts (Music: Composition) in The University of Michigan 2022

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**Instrumentation**

Solo Flute  
Solo Clarinet in B♭  
Solo Violin  
Solo Cello  

Piccolo  
Flute 1-2  
Oboe 1-2  
English Horn  
Clarinet in B♭ 1-2  
Bass Clarinet in B♭  
Bassoon 1-2  
Contrabassoon  

Horn in F 1-4  
   Stop Mute (optional)  
Trumpet in B♭ 1-3  
   Straight Metal Mute, Harmon Mute  
Trombone 1-2  
Bass Trombone  
Tuba  

Percussion 1  
   Snare Drum, Glockenspiel,  
   Suspended Cymbal  

Percussion 2  
   Vibraphone, Woodblock  

Percussion 3  
   Bass Drum, Marimba,  
   Crotales: "\[\text{Crotale symbols}\]"
Abstract

The Bird-While is an 18-minute concerto for flute, clarinet, violin, cello, and symphonic winds and was commissioned by Hub New Music. The concerto is titled after and based on Keith Taylor’s poem “Acolytes in the Bird-While,” which explores the flora and fauna of Michigan and the struggle to persist in the face of climate change. I aimed to write a concerto for an unconventional group of instruments that demonstrates their virtuosity while providing a platform for raising awareness of and education around environmental and climate justice. Each movement derives its title from Taylor’s poem, drawing attention to pivotal lines in the poem’s narrative.

The first movement, “Avian Gods,” is inspired by the calls of the pileated woodpecker and redstart warbler, two Michigan bird species central to Taylor’s poem. This movement’s $\frac{5}{8}$ motif follows the woodpecker’s five-note call, often separated into three- and two-note groupings that can be heard in both the soloists’ and ensemble’s parts. Snap pizzicato in the solo violin and cello evoke the woodpecker’s pecking, and the ensemble’s driving $\frac{5}{8}$ ostinato conjures the warbler’s high, repetitive five-note shriek.

The second movement, “Fragile, Vanishing Gifts,” highlights the individual natural elements that surround us every day. The flute, clarinet, violin, and cello articulate the future loss of these elements due to climate change as they introduce the movement’s theme separately, then come together in canon, a demonstration of our environment’s delicate balance between the individual and the collective. This theme originates from my Moon Dream (2020) for soprano saxophone, an early pandemic-era lullaby commissioned by Latitude 49 for their Bagatelles Project in support of the Coalition for African Americans in the Performing Arts.

The third movement, “Survive,” is both a question and a call to action: can the performers—and our environment—withstanding disruption and damage? As I was writing this movement, my best friend and horn player, Marina Krol, suddenly passed in a car crash, which left me pondering my own ability to weather life’s storms. Dedicated to Marina, “Survive” features horn solos and a brass chorale throughout to commemorate her bright, resilient spirit and her support of new music. The movement’s title also references the way in which music itself might survive through history, which I illustrate by quoting the prelude of J.S. Bach’s Violin Partita No. 3. Two more nods to Bach appear later in this movement in the solo violin and cello. Piping plover calls are referenced in the fleeting, staccato woodwind parts, and the movement’s focus on quintal harmony and recurring fifths harken to the woodpecker’s opening five-note call.
THE BIRD-WHILE

I. Avian Gods

Fleeting $\frac{3}{4} = 144 \ (\frac{3}{4} \text{ } \text{sempre})$

Transposed Score

commissioned by Hub New Music

GALA FLAGELLO

(2022)

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GALA FLAGELLO | THE BIRD-WHILE

1. solo

To W.B.
GALA FLAGELLO | THE BIRD-WHILE
II. Fragile, Vanishing Gifts

Delicately, with longing $\frac{d}{d} = 40$ ($\frac{d}{d} = \text{sempre}$)
Fl.
Cl.
Vln.
Vc.
Picc.
Eng.
Hn.
Cl.
B.
Cl.
Bsn.
Cbsn.
Hn.
Tpt.
Tbn.
B.
Tbn.
Tba.
Glock.
Vib.
Crot.

Suspended Cymbal
To Glock.
Buzz Drum

TRANSPOSED SCORE | II. FRAGILE, VANISHING GIFTS
in memoriam Marina Krol (1994–2022)

III. Survive

Foreboding $\frac{d}{4} = 72$

Flute

Clarinet in B

Violin

Cello

Piccolo

Flute

Oboe

English Horn

Clarinet in B

Bass Clarinet in B

Bassoon

Contrabassoon

Horn in F

Horn in F

Trumpet in Bb

Trumpet in Bb

Trombone

Bass Trombone

Tuba

Percussion

Percussion

Percussion

stagger breathe

legato

legato

stagger breathe

stagger breathe

legato

legato

stagger breathe

legato
Fl.
Cl.
Vln.
Vc.
Picc.
Eng.
Hn.
Cl.
B.
Bsn.
Cbsn.
Hn.
3Hn
Tpt.
2Tpt.
Tbn.
B.
Tba.
Glock.
Vib.
Crot.
GALA FLAGELLO | THE BIRD-WHILE

\[ \text{Fl.} \quad \text{Cl.} \quad \text{Vln.} \quad \text{Vc.} \quad \text{Picc.} \quad \text{1Fl.} \quad \text{2Fl.} \quad \text{1Ob.} \quad \text{2Ob.} \quad \text{Eng. Hn.} \quad \text{Hn.} \quad \text{1Cl.} \quad \text{2Cl.} \quad \text{B. Cl.} \quad \text{Bsn.} \quad \text{Cbsn.} \quad \text{1Tpt.} \quad \text{2Tpt.} \quad \text{3Tpt.} \quad \text{1Tbn.} \quad \text{2Tbn.} \quad \text{Tba.} \quad \text{S.} \quad \text{D.} \quad \text{Vib.} \quad \text{Mar.} \]

\[ \text{rit.} \]

\[ \text{p legato} \]
Fleeting $\frac{4}{4} = 144$

GALA FLAGELLO | THE BIRD-WHILE

1

1

Picc.

Eng. Hn.

Cl.

B. Cl.

Bsn.

Eng.

Hn.

Tpt.

Tbn.

Tba.

Vib.

Mar.