

beginnings eighth blackbird

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Molly Alicia Barth *flutes* | Michael J. Maccaferri *clarinets* | Matt Albert *violin*
Nicholas Photinos *cello* | Matthew Duvall *percussion* | Lisa Kaplan *piano*

Daniel Kellogg (b. 1976)

Divinum Mysterium (2000) (33:37)

- ① Prelude (1:03)*
- ② I. Beginnings (5:15)
- ③ II. The Spirit of God Moved Upon the Face of the Waters (9:12)
- ④ III. Light (3:32)
- ⑤ IV. Rest (6:28)
- ⑥ V. Rejoicing (8:02)

*with Chanticleer (Producer: Steve Barnett / Engineer: Preston Smith)

George Crumb (b. 1929)

Vox Balaenae (Voice of the Whale) For Three Masked Players
(Electric Flute, Electric Cello, and Electric Piano) (1971) (22:28)

- ⑦ Vocalise (. . for the beginning of time) (4:32)

Variations on Sea-Time (10:44)

- ⑧ Sea Theme (2:01)
- ⑨ Archeozoic [Var. I] (1:26)
- ⑩ Proterozoic [Var. II] (2:13)
- ⑪ Paleozoic [Var. III] (1:17)
- ⑫ Mesozoic [Var. IV] (1:15)
- ⑬ Cenozoic [Var. V] (2:28)
- ⑭ Sea-Nocturne (. . for the end of time) (7:11)

Total Time: (56:20)



Who verily knows and who can here declare it,
whence it was born and whence comes this creation?

The Gods are later than this world's production.
Who knows then whence it first came into being?

He, the first origin of this creation,
whether he formed it all or did not form it,

Whose eye controls this world in highest heaven,
he verily knows it, or perhaps he knows not.

— from the tenth book of the Rig Veda, Hymn CXXIX, verses 6–7

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Chanticleer appears courtesy of Warner Classics International

Molly Barth performs on a Lillian Burkart flute and piccolo

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How did the world begin? How did life come about? Religion has given us vivid poetic descriptions of the creation, and it has inspired literature attributing the creating force to God, a god, or an unending cycle that has no beginning and no end. Science has given us the Big Bang, with its single point of super-condensed proto-matter exploding to create innumerable celestial bodies, and Darwin, who explained how man evolved from the failed species that came before us. No matter what we believe, we are fascinated by our beginnings, and we are continually striving for explanations that satisfy our desire to know ourselves better.

Whether coming from Daniel Kellogg's Christian beliefs or George Crumb's fascination with the timelessness of nature, both pieces on this disc share an incredible commonality of musical responses to these questions. Both pieces explore the inherent violence of creation, whether in short outbursts, as in the opening of the Kellogg, or in the jagged, piercing melody heard at the beginning of the Crumb. Both pieces move from this violence to joyful celebrations and tender contemplations, using the full dynamic

range and color palette at each composer's disposal. Both pieces offer long, expansive lines and melodies, defying and stretching time in an attempt to prolong the emotions contained within the composers' musical outpouring.

For us, playing and interpreting these works, their clearest common bond is the breadth of human experience they suggest. Though Kellogg and Crumb are inspired by different backgrounds and beliefs, these two pieces bring out the same incredibly wide range of emotions, reminding us that it is the totality of a person's experiences that, taken altogether, make a life. Whether leading to the boisterously jubilant ending of the Kellogg or the quietly exultant last strain of the Crumb, both pieces celebrate the fact that we live, that the universe does exist, that out of the obscure chaos, a harmonious peace has been achieved.

We do not know how the world began, but we do know that these pieces tell that story much better than we ever could.

— eighth blackbird



Daniel Kellogg *Divinum Mysterium* (2000)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. —*John 1:1–5 (ESV)*

The opening verses of John’s Gospel and the several that follow are among my favorite passages of scripture. John writes that not only was the world created through Christ, but Christ is also the light that will overcome the darkness by restoring the creation. This was the plan from before there was existence: it is circular, beautiful, and offers complete hope. We humans are not in fact a cosmic accident but are the result of the greatest work of art (the creation), by the greatest artist (Christ). We are not alone, but in fact are loved.

This piece is a personal response to the overwhelming beauty of the creation and the magnificent forces that were involved in its beginnings. I am moved to capture glimpses of this story in music. I wanted to dwell on God’s terrifying presence and power, His Light that is all glorious, His compassion and love, and the response of rejoicing.

Divinum Mysterium is the name of a text by Prudentius that was translated and set as a hymn called “Of the Father’s Love Begotten.” Singing this hymn each Advent season in our family’s church is one of the most beautiful and striking

experiences in my musical memory. It was unlike any other musical experience I knew: we sang it in unison and without accompaniment except for tonic bell tones between the phrases. I felt connected to the people of ancient times who used it to express their praise, and yet it felt vibrant and contemporary. It remains my favorite hymn.

When I set out to write a piece about the creation this melody came to mind as the perfect vehicle to represent my Christian understanding of the creation. This melody is sung at the beginning of the piece, played by piano and cello at the end, and woven throughout each movement.

Evermore and evermore.

— Daniel Kellogg

Divinum Mysterium is a Catherine Shouse Commission. It was commissioned by eighth blackbird as part of the national series of works from Meet the Composer/Arts Endowment Commissioning Music/USA. This commissioning program is made possible by generous support from the Catherine Filene Shouse Foundation with additional support from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Helen F. Whitaker Fund, and the Dayton Hudson Foundation.

Divinum Mysterium

Corde natus ex parentis
Ere mundi exordium
Alpha et cognominatus,
Ipse fons et clausula
Omnium quae sunt fuerunt,
Quaeque post futura sunt,
Saeculorum saeculis.

Of the Father’s love begotten,
Ere the worlds began to be,
He is Alpha and Omega,
He the source, the ending he,
Of the things that are, that have been,
And that future years shall see,
Evermore and evermore!

— Aurelius Clemens Prudentius (348–413)

The *Washington Post* calls **Daniel Kellogg**, born in 1976, “the most generously gifted of the American under-30s.” His music has been played throughout the United States and heard on National Public Radio’s “Performance Today,” New York’s WQXR, and China National Radio. In 2002, Young Concert Artists chose him as its Composer-in-Residence. Kellogg has received commissions from eighth blackbird, the Ying Quartet, the Claremont Trio, the Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble, 20th Century Consort, and Soli Deo Gloria. Mr. Kellogg’s honors include a 2003 Charles Ives Fellowship from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the 2003 ASCAP Rudolf Nissim Award, a 2003 ASCAP Morton Gould Young Composer Award, and the 2000 William Schuman Prize of BMI. During 2000–2001 he served as the Sackler Master-Artist-in-Residence at the University of Connecticut. Kellogg holds two masters degrees from the Yale School of Music and a B.M. from the Curtis Institute of Music. His teachers have included Don Freund, Ned Rorem, Jennifer Higdon, Joseph Schwantner, Ezra Laderman, and Martin Bresnick.

Praised by *The New York Times* for its “precise, pure, and deeply felt singing,” the acclaimed vocal ensemble **Chanticleer** has developed a remarkable reputation for its vivid interpretations of vocal literature, from Renaissance to jazz, and from gospel to venturesome new music. With its seamless blend of twelve male voices, ranging from countertenor to bass, San Francisco-based Chanticleer has recorded exclusively for Teldec Classics International since 1994.

George Crumb *Vox Balaenae (Voice of the Whale)* (1971)

Vox Balaenae was inspired by the singing of the humpback whale, a tape recording of which I had heard two or three years previously. 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). It's an abstract piece of nature-music, in that I let the sounds of the instruments suggest the quality of the whale song. I wrote an evocation of nature, using artistic license, like Beethoven in his Sixth Symphony. When people hear the summer storm, they don't go rushing for their umbrellas....

Reading about the Big Bang inspired the violence of the opening *Vocalise* (marked in the score “wildly fantastic, grotesque”). I included a parody of Strauss's *Also Sprach Zarathustra* because there's something kind of primeval in the Nietzsche itself — it suggests going way back in time, and the language is almost biblical in its nature. The variations are named after geological eras to symbolize infinite antiquity, a time immeasurably in the past. In the concluding *Sea-Nocturne* (“serene, pure, transfigured”), 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, suggesting a *diminuendo* beyond the threshold of hearing.

— George Crumb

Born in 1929, **George Crumb** is one of the eminent composers of our time. He has received numerous awards, including the 1968 Pulitzer Prize in Music and a Grammy for Best Contemporary Composition for *Star-Child*. Crumb has taught at Hollins College, the University of Colorado at Boulder, SUNY Buffalo, and, for 32 years, at the University of Pennsylvania at Philadelphia, retiring from teaching in 1997. His own teachers included Eugene Weigler, Boris Blacher, and Ross Lee Finney.

Among Crumb's early works, his *Three Early Songs* for voice and piano (1947), *Sonata for Solo Violoncello* (1955), and *Variazioni* for orchestra (1959) are the best known. Crumb did not gain international fame until the 1960s, however. His *Five Pieces for Piano* (1962) mark the beginning of his mature period, characterized by the frequent use of extended techniques and electrified or amplified instruments to create distinctive sound worlds. The *Five Pieces for Piano* were followed by many works that garnered popular and critical success, including *Black Angels* for electric string quartet (1970); *Ancient Voices of Children* for mezzo-soprano, boy soprano, oboe, mandolin, harp, amplified piano and toy piano, and percussion (1970); *Makrokosmos* Volumes 1 and 2 for amplified piano (1972, 1973); and *Vox Balaenae* (1971).

Before there was earth or sea or the sky that covers everything, Nature appeared the same throughout the whole world: what we call chaos: a raw confused mass, nothing but inert matter, badly combined discordant atoms of things, confused in the one place

This conflict was ended by a god and a greater order of nature, since he split off the earth from the sky, and the sea from the land, and divided the transparent heavens from the dense air. When he had disentangled the elements, and freed them from the obscure mass, he fixed them in separate spaces in harmonious peace.

— from Ovid: *Metamorphoses*, Book I



eighth blackbird, formed in 1996, is one of the world's premier new music ensembles. Winners of numerous awards, including the Naumburg Chamber Music Award, the Concert Artists Guild Competition, and several ASCAP/CMA Awards for Adventurous Programming, they are currently in residence at the University of Richmond in Virginia and the University of Chicago. Their past seasons have included performances in South Korea, Poland, Mexico, and throughout the United States and Canada. The group made their Carnegie Hall debut premiering David Schober's *Split Horizon: Concerto for Sextet and Orchestra* with the American Composers Orchestra in 2004. They have been featured on "CBS Sunday Morning," National Public Radio's "All Things Considered," and in *The New York Times*. eighth blackbird is represented by ICM Artists, Ltd. For more information, please visit www.eighthblackbird.com.



thanks to

our family and friends, who are always there for us, no matter where we are

Judy Sherman for setting the bar high and then helping us to fly far above it

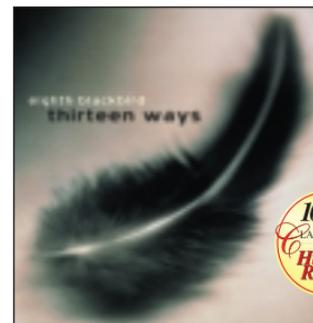
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Chanticleer for saving our fans from having to listen to us sing

ICM and 21C, for being two of the most supportive and hippest three-alphanumeric-character-named organizations around

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Nietzsche: trans. Thomas Common

I tell you: one must still have chaos in one,
to give birth to a dancing star.
I tell you: ye have still chaos in you.

— from *Also Sprach Zarathustra* by Friedrich Nietzsche



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