

Galan Trio
Kinesis

Pastoral (and there were birds. . .)

Robert Denham

From Here to There

Deborah Kavasch

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Intermission

Trio (hommage á Geoff Nuttal)

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David S. Carter

Placed in a Puzzling Light, and Moving

Kevin Zhang

La mar amarga (2007)

Cindy Cox

- II. Expressive but very deliberate
- I. Supple, mysterious, and very fast

Shadow Play (2015)

Christopher Dobrian

Pastoral is certainly not an original title, as it is one of the most common titles in the repertoire. Although Beethoven's Symphony No. 6 immediately comes to mind, I am drawing more specifically from a group that I will term the British "idyllists," which to me include names like Bax, Bridge, Butterworth, Delius, Vaughan Williams, Warlock, and the like. With obvious exceptions, the music of these composers evokes a sense of country meadows, brooks, stone fences, livestock, and of course birds. Their music is often not for show, and if it is programmatic beyond its title, it certainly is most often not epic in terms of its ambitions; much the opposite. Its purpose is to provide moments of pause for reflection and meditation.

From Here To There, commissioned by the Galan Trio for their Kinesis project, is a piano trio in four movements inspired by poems of Salvatore Salerno, Poet Laureate of Modesto, California. The four movements bear the same names as the poems from Salerno's *Hello, Posterity*, and all depict some aspect of water and its movement: roaring ocean waves, a rippling pool and waterfall, dancing snowflakes, and the forceful flow of snowmelt forming a river that spreads into the sea.

Far Beyond As the title suggests, this piece tries to project the sound of the acoustic instruments beyond their normal boundaries, through the use of several special instrumental techniques. Using timbre and sound color changes, the instruments expand themselves into unusual sound combinations.

Syneche The historical discourse on continuity and discreteness, dating back to ancient Greek philosophy, encapsulates the tension between unity and plurality in understanding the nature of reality. Atomism, championed by figures like Democritus and Epicurus, posited that matter is composed of indivisible particles, challenging the idea of infinite divisibility inherent in continuity. In contrast, Aristotle and the Stoics upheld continuity, viewing space, time, and motion as continuous entities. Aristotle's concept of *syneche*, or continuity, emphasized the interconnectedness of phenomena without reducing them to discrete units, allowing for potential infinite divisibility without requiring indivisible atoms. This philosophical debate continues to resonate in contemporary mathematics, where modern frameworks like nonstandard

analysis and smooth infinitesimal analysis explore the synthesis of continuity and infinitesimals.

Fragments from the Wasteland (2024) is a collection of 5 works based upon the re-interpretation of the iconic poem by T.S. Eliot: *The Wasteland* (1922), with texts by Walt Whitman, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, attesting to the rise and curiosity in spiritualism and mediums in mid 19th c. with a shared connection of communicating with the dead, and romantic/modernist fascination with death by water. The piece should be played as if drowning, overcome in the paroxysm of gasping for breath, and finally sinking to the depths of the sea--looking upward, transfigured.

Trio Omaggio is dedicated to the memory of Geoff Nuttall, violinist and cofounder of the Saint Lawrence String Quartet (SLSQ), with gratitude for having had the opportunity to collaborate from 2020 to 2022. Material for this *hommage* has been adapted from our workshop sessions during that time.

Sifting Chaparral was inspired by the dense chaparral shrub that is common in Southern California where I live and which has a counterpart in Greece (phrygana), where Galan Trio is based. Both Southern California and much of Greece share a dry, mild climate where these plants can thrive in coastal areas. The piece sifts through a thicket of loops and polyrhythms, finding legato melodies or pizzicato bits.

Placed in a puzzling light, and moving is a piano trio split into five miniature movements. The outer movements are scored for the full trio, while the inner ones progress through each duo combination of the instrumentation's subsets. Its title comes from the concluding stanza of John Ashbery's *Some Trees*, from which this piece takes inspiration.

La mar amarga You may recognize the wonderful opening of Federico García Lorca's famous *Romance sonámbulo*, "Verde que te quiero verde" [Green I love you green]. The title of the work, *la mar amarga* [the bitter sea] comes from a later section of this poem; I loved the sound of the elided repetition of "(l)a mar" and found in it a strong relationship to the kind of covered repetitions in my own piece. But you probably don't know of an oddball work called *Sensitive Chaos* (published by the Rudolf Steiner Press) by Theodor Schwenk. He wrote this study in the 1960s and subtitled it "The creation of flowing forms in water

and air." His mix of the poetic and the scientific, with chapter headings such as "Archetypal movements of water" and "The formation of vortices" was particularly inspiring as metaphors for my approach to musical shape and direction. Like the gorgeous pictures of water and wind patterns at the end of the book, my music strives to be in a simultaneously fluid yet architecturally static form.

Shadow Play originated from a graphical conception of music. The string instruments, which easily produce sustained tones, are treated as generators of linear and curvilinear motion, whereas the piano, which produces more percussive sounds, is used to generate articulatory points and groups of points that punctuate convergences and divergences in the melodic motion of the strings. (This approach was surely influenced by my reading, long ago, of *Point and Line to Plane* by painter/writer Wassily Kandinsky.) A variable sense of stasis and kinesis in the music is created by continual transfer of energy from one player to another, effectuated by changes in pitch register, dynamics, and rate of activity. The piano casts an harmonic aura or shadow around the string melodies, thus the title *Shadow Play*.

GALAN TRIO

Known for the passionate and energetic spirit of their performances, the Athens-based **Galan Trio** is active both in Greece and internationally. Focused mainly on presenting new compositions, **Galan Trio** creates original programs, the most recent being *Kinesis*. For this project, the trio commissioned five distinguished composers from the United States to compose on this theme, a collaboration that led to their first tour in October 2021. Since then, Galan Trio presented *Kinesis* in more than 20 US universities and many more have been scheduled until fall 2025.

Galan Trio's discography counts 4 albums by now; *Switch* (Akanthos Int. LTD), *Ararat* (Melism Records), *Kinesis* (Neuma Records) and *De Chirico* (Phasma Music).

In 2017, they released their debut album *Switch*, a musical blend of cultures with works composed for and dedicated to Galan Trio by Thomas Bramel (U.S.A.), David Haladjian (Armenia), Vincent Kennedy (Ireland), Vasco Pereira (Portugal), Harald Weiss (Germany), and Nikos Xanthoulis (Greece). The album presentation took place in Athens at Megaron Concert Hall. *Switch* received critical acclaim and was broadcasted on the radio in Greece, Switzerland, the United States, Portugal, Germany and Armenia.

In July 2016, the ensemble travelled to Gulangyu, China, the so-called "Piano Island", for the series of concerts "Greek Inspirations in China", the first festival in China that featured Greek music. Collaborations with other accomplished composers and musicians include the mezzo-soprano Alexandra Gravas, the flutist Jessica Quinones, and the composers Dirk Brosse, Igor Vorobyov, Yorgos Vassilandonakis, Paul Richards, Arthur Aharonian, Martin Gendelman, Philip Blackburn, and Richard Lavenda among others. In 2019, Galan Trio composed and recorded the original soundtrack for the documentary *Y1: Silence of the deep* directed by Philippos Vardakas. Schott Editions published *Secret Dancing* by Harald Weiss with a dedication to the Trio. Recently, the Trio presented their work in the USA, Spain, Italy, Armenia, the Netherlands and in Greece as the prestigious Athens & Epidaurus Festival, the Komitas Festival, the fourth online festival of the

Greek National Opera, the Onassis Foundation's Open Day and the Megaron Concert Hall series *Music Portraits*. In December 2021, Galan Trio premiered their project *Ararat* at the Archaeological Museum of Athens.

Galan Trio's future plans include a new project in collaboration with the flutist Rita D'Arcangelo and the *Three Essential Elements* organization, the release of their new album *Kinesis Vol. 2* (Neuma Records) and the fifth *Kinesis* project in California.

www.galantrio.com

[h/ps://www.facebook.com/galantrio/](https://www.facebook.com/galantrio/) **FROM HERE TO**

THERE

The waves roar in and hiss themselves away. Because I walk on
enameled sand,
There is no doubt at the edge of the sea,

The waves ride in and scrape themselves away.
Because I turn my back to land,
There is no deceit at the edge of the sea.

The waves reach in and whisper themselves away.
I hear it say when I stop to stand, *There is no fear*
at the edge of the sea.

REFLECTION

On a shaded ledge by a waterfall
I watch trout flurry, coved by a granite wall.

Winds ripple down the pool, turn my thoughts To three far friends
whom I have fought:

One who has my smile each day, but not my heart Coiling in envy;
I play the cheater's part

Of teasing another's love to hook him; and a third
Whose calm offends, I bait with a well-barbed word.

The trout waver, swirl in a pool of sun,
Showing rainbow sides. I think in their slow run,

How could I have poisoned you so long?
Forgive, though you can't see me I was wrong

The four trout slip in a current, flicking fins. They stream by
weeds; I take them in.

Swim closer, silver. Will you deliver my wish?

SNOW

Snowflakes milling in a curdled sky
Fall to the level of things,
Locking farm, homes and factories
With the silence only clouds can bring.

The tracks of the bobcat are filled, A current under sea Picked his bones in whispers. As he rose The cries of birds are stilled,
and fell
When onto roofs and burrows and trees
There drops a sovereign chill.

Each flake unique, but all when frozen rules;
Snow is a white democracy, windward, A heaven's vestibule.
tall as you.

AS GOES THE RIVER

With what power from the womb of snows
Do the bright waters come, sweeping Here I shade down and hide my thoughts--I do not expose them, Downwards in a forceful flow;
And yet they expose me more than all (my other poems)."
With what vigor the waters push,
More of itself girded and gathering **from Sonnets from the Portuguese (Elizabeth Barrett Browning) 1850** Strength to form a foaming
rush; XLIII.
Then with what acceptance the river finds
All of nature rendered in the raw,
The gullies, boulders, debris rinds
Of every obstacle, every chiseled flaw;
Through the gravity of things through space,
The river spreads itself into the sea.
As goes the river, so are we.

Speak louder, white water Is this the meaning of fish?
The Wasteland: Death by Water (T.S. Eliot) 1922

IV. DEATH BY WATER

"Phlebas the Phoenician, a fortnight dead,
Forgot the cry of gulls, and the deep sea swell
And the profit and loss.

He passed the stages of his age and youth
Entering the whirlpool."

Gentile or Jew O you who turn the wheel and look to
Consider Phlebas, who was once handsome and

from Leaves of Grass: Here, the frailest leaves of me (Walt Whitman) 1867

"Here the frailest leaves of me, and yet my strongest- lasting:
Downwards in a forceful flow;

"How do I love thee? Let me count the ways. . . .
I shall but love thee better after death."