

Today's Performers

Mark Powell, *music director*

Strings

Lydia Becker, *violin*
Karin Theobald, *violin*
James Marshall, *viola*
Joëlla Becker, *cello*
Owen Cummings, *cello*

Chorus

SOPRANO:

Noemi Bing
Amy Chiang
Anna Lenti
Guo Wu

ALTO:

Emily Busby
Reagan Casteel
Kyrsten Chambers (*soloist*)

BIODANCE:

Heather Acomb, Rose Pasquarello Beauchamp, Michelle Gipner, Missy Pfohl Smith, Donetta Tchorelev, Anne Harris Wilcox

University of Rochester Program of Dance & Movement Students:

Alison Farr, Louis Herman, Caitlin Quinn, Katherine Serna, Kaitlin White, Joshua Wolkoff, Menghan Yang, Callista Zaronias, Zehui Zhang

Technical Crew:

Mike Dziakonias, *stage manager & lights*
Gregory Thompson, *recording engineer*
Michael Sherman, *videographer*
Matt Curlee, *image sequencing and editing for performance*
Lev Roshal, *live image cueing*

Improvisors

Austin Yee, *trumpet*
Jordan Moore, *euphonium & ocarina*
Denver Pascua, *trombone & euphonium*
Brett Copeland, *tuba and live electronics*
Andrew Laufer, *percussion*
Micah Harrow, *percussion*

TENOR:

Nate Bear (*soloist*)
Henry Dean
Jordan Moore

BASS:

Charles Berofsky
Caleb Hopkins
Alex Nick (*soloist*)

Humpback Whales and Their Extraordinary Mystery of Song



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Sunday, November 3, 2019

12 PM - 5 PM

Hatch Recital Hall

Abstract

This symposium targets the ecology of the oceans, while focusing ultimately on highly intelligent aquatic mammals—cetaceans—and humpback whales in particular. These creatures display complex cooperative behavior, including their unique and mysterious songs. The topic is wide and relevant to numerous academic programs across campuses, and that is reflected in the pan-campus effort entailed in forming this event. Key elements include the Arts in Mind Project (AIM) from the URM, the Eastman School of Music (ESM), where the event will take place, and the College which houses the Institute for the Performing Arts (IPA) and the Program of Dance and Movement. Two honored guests and collaborators on the study of whales will present. Jim Darling will discuss the ecological science and research underlying what is known about whales and their environment, while Flip Nicklin, an internationally renowned National Geographic photographer of whales and their behavior, will present his history and images that chronicle four decades of study and interactions with these remarkable whales. Finally, the symposium will culminate in the premiere of an exciting new musical composition in honor of humpback song. The performance is a collaboration among faculty and students of ESM, BIODANCE, faculty and students from the UR Program of Dance and Movement, as well as photos and videos from Flip Nicklin.

About the Symposium

The origin of this symposium began during an ecological adventure in Baja California with Lindblad Expeditions and National Geographic Society (NGS), focusing on the bounty of wildlife in the oceans of the region—both the Pacific side, and the Sea of Cortez between Baja and the mainland of Mexico. The region is well-known for its plethora of marine mammals, including at least 6 species of whales, and several varieties of dolphin, often in huge pods. For some whales, this is a favored breeding ground for them during the winter months, alternating by migration with life in the high arctic thousands of miles away, given a rich abundance of preferred food. Prominent among them are Humpbacks. These are highly intelligent and cooperative creatures that uniquely possess a remarkable penchant to produce sophisticated and mysterious songs.

It is in this context that Gary Paige (URMC faculty and Director of AIM) and Flip Nicklin (NGS photographer and whale specialist) met on ship. Over two weeks, discussions explored questions that in many cases seemed naïve, and yet were met with unclear or even unanswerable replies. Clearly there is much to be learned. We tend to focus on our own terrestrial ecology, and yet threats to our environment (e.g. global warming), affect the aquatic ecology as well. Change is upon us, and on a progressively incremental path. That said, much has, in fact, been learned over the past half century, and progress continues. The concept of a symposium on the subject was spawned, both to learn what is known, and to provoke understanding of what remains to be addressed.

Conversations next transferred to UR colleagues, particularly in terms of formalizing the symposium in relation to ecology, social behavior and art, to include an overview of the oceans, the role of whales, and ultimately the remarkable behavior of humpbacks and their unique musical communications. However, an additional element for a more compelling experience was needed, and that was provided through conversations with faculty in the College (Missy Pfohl Smith, Director of the Dance Program and the IPA) and the Eastman School of Music (Jim Doser). What began as a chat about an existing musical work featuring whale-song morphed into the concept of a new work to be developed by Matt Curlee in honor of whale-song. This was quickly followed by the natural inclusion of dance to provide a synergistic physical rendition.

Schedule of Events

12:00 PM – 12:30 PM	Welcome and Introduction	Gary Paige
12:30 PM – 1:30 PM	<i>Five Really Strange Things about Humpback Whale Song</i>	Jim Darling
1:30 PM – 2:30 PM	<i>Nomads of the Deep: A Personal Story with Art through Images</i>	Flip Nicklin
2:30 PM – 3:00 PM	Break – Please take this opportunity to write down a question for our panel	
3:00 PM – 4:00 PM	Panel Discussion and Q&A Session	Jim Darling, Flip Nicklin, and Gary Paige
4:00 PM – 4:20 PM	Brief pause to set the stage for performance	
4:20 PM – 5:00 PM	<i>Unsoftly, to the Night</i> (World Premiere)	Matt Curlee
	Mark Powell, <i>music director</i> Missy Pfohl Smith & Mariah Steele, <i>choreographers</i> Instrumental and Vocal Students from the Eastman School of Music Members of BIODANCE and the University of Rochester Program of Dance and Movement Photos and video by Flip Nicklin@Mindenpictures, Jason Sturgis, Ralph Pace and the Whale Trust Archive. Humpback Whale images obtained under (NMFS Permits) #753, 987, 13846, 19225.	
5:00 PM – 6:00 PM	Reception with light refreshments. All are welcome!	



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Today's event was co-sponsored by the Humanities Project, a program of the University of Rochester Humanities Center, the Institute for the Performing Arts, the Program of Dance and Movement, the Arts in Mind Project, and the Institute for Music Leadership at the Eastman School of Music.