

Full Score

Katharina S. G. Mueller (2024)

# The Great Albatross

*for small string ensemble*

Duration ca. 3''

*Written for the Upper Valley Music Center, and dedicated to my former violin teacher, Alicia Casey.*

## About the Piece

The great albatross is among the largest flying birds on the planet, with a wingspan of 9-11 feet (3+ meters) and infamously can glide over the ocean for miles at a time, coasting on the air with barely any movement in their wings. The soaring melody of this piece, based in E major and the E dorian mode, sails above a continuous rocking pattern of waves in C minor. The wave motif ebbs and flows in asynchronous shapes through the entire piece. The albatross melody eventually appears in several octaves as the piece swells to its peak, and one can imagine a whole flock of these great sea birds moving smoothly through the sky.

## Instrumentation

Violin 1  
Violin 2  
Violin 3/Viola  
Violoncello

The violin 3 part works as a viola part, with an additional viola solo on the open drone C at mm. 40-48. A viola part in alto clef is available. If no violist is in the group, a cello player should take the drone solo on the low open C.

## Additional Notes

Notes with Tentuto are a slight accented with a greater dynamic and bow speed emphasis to shape the phrase.



This piece has no key signature. Pitches are written in a diatonic context as much as possible, though sometimes that means enharmonic equivalents alternating between **#** and **b**.



A **#** or a **b** carries through its entire measure unless it is cancelled by a **♮** natural, i.e. an E **b** at the beginning of the bar means all following written Es are E **b** unless otherwise indicated.

Grace notes fall before the beat

Contact composer Katharina S. G. Mueller at [katya.mueller.24@gmail.com](mailto:katya.mueller.24@gmail.com) with any questions



## The Great Albatross

for string chamber group

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$\text{♩} = 60$  As Waves 6 Gliding Above

Violin 1

Violin 2

Violin 3

Violoncello

7

10

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vln. 3

Vc.

16  $\text{♩} = 72$  Moving More

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vln. 3

Vc.

**23** Ascending

5

19

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vln. 3

Vc.

*mf*

*mf*

*mp*

*mp*

accel. . . . .

**30** ♩=80 Soaring, with Delight

25

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vln. 3

Vc.

*mp*

*mp*

*mf*

*mf*

*f*

*f*

*f*

*f*

**36** Turning Homeward

32

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vln. 3

Vc.

38

Vln. 1 *mf* *p*

Vln. 2 *mf* *mp* *pp*

Vln. 3 *mf* *mp* *pp*

Viola *mp*

Vc. *mf* *mf* *pp* *p*

SOLO

change bows as needed

44

Vln. 1 *pp*

Vln. 2 *mp*

Vln. 3 *p* *pp*

Vla. *pp*

Vc. *pp*

48 change bows as needed

Viola Rejoins Vln. 3

51

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vln. 3

Vc.

*pp*

Measures 51-56. Vln. 1: Melodic line with a fermata at the end. Vln. 2: Melodic line with a crescendo leading to a piano (*pp*) dynamic. Vln. 3: Rhythmic accompaniment. Vc.: Bass line. The key signature has one flat and the time signature is 4/4.

57

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vln. 3

Vc.

Div.

Measures 57-60. Vln. 1: Melodic line with a fermata at the end. Vln. 2: Melodic line. Vln. 3: Rhythmic accompaniment. Vc.: Bass line. The key signature has one flat and the time signature is 4/4. A "Div." marking is present in the Vc. part.