

# Great Blue Heron

## by Nicholas Fagnilli

### Program Notes

My father always had a profound sense of oneness with nature. As I grew up, he would show me videos of natural wonders like the Great Barrier Reef and raised me to be sensitive to the natural world around me. Every summer, we would spend time in Cape Henlopen, Delaware, where all kinds of unique birds and sea creatures call home. Cape Henlopen is the natural mating ground of the Horseshoe crab, and the Bombay Hook National Wildlife Refuge is famous for its Blue Heron spotting. Cape Henlopen is also famous for its naval defense system-turned-museum, a remnant from World War II efforts to keep German U-boats off of Eastern shores. The complex sports a network of huge and distinctive watchtowers and bunkers built under a great deal of the dunes all over the Cape.

The tape accompanying the bass solo utilizes sounds recorded at Cape Henlopen and Bombay Hook, synthesizer sounds, and a recording of myself reading text that was written by Colleen d' Alelio, who also did her growing up in Cape Henlopen.

### Performance notes

There is not a need for the performer to align in an exact metric way with the tape. The text cues are points where the performer should listen for the narrator and line up generally with the pacing of the tape this way.

You should find another person who can activate the tape for you in performance. Some performers also have foot pedals that can trigger certain digital events, and I recommend this solution as well!

Please use stage monitors in performance!

The natural harmonic notations are nonstandard but were necessary as part of the process of writing this piece. e.g. by "7" is meant the 7th harmonic on the string, "9" the 9th harmonic, etc. Some of these harmonics are off the fingerboard.

During the pizzicato section, the tape will begin to land on a D pedal with you. You will know that you have made it to the fifth page in time if your low arco notes come in with swelling synth chords that appear in that section.

I only give a couple bow placement directions. Feel free to add in as much sul ponticello as you want. However, make sure harmonics and double stops project.

Finally, do not worry if the fermata at "Digging hands..." on page 3 lasts a long time.

*For Dad*  
**Great Blue Heron**  
 for solo contrabass and tape

Adagio, Appassionato (♩ = 120)

Nicholas Fagnilli

Contrabass

*Sul Pont.*

*f*

*mf*

*Slower*

Ord.

*gliss.*

Tape On

*mp*

3

10"

16"

16"

Text:  
"As the Sun Rises..."

7

10

11

*sim.*

10"

6"

4"

6"

6"

*As loud as  
 the projection and resonance allows for multiple tones.*

"Combing through long dry grass..."

♩ = 70

*f*

*gliss.*

*rf*

*mp*

3

"...shallow waves."

[After Birds enter]

"In the Heavy Marsh..."

3" 8"

*f* *ff* *pp* *f* Harmonic Gliss.

(sul D)

3 5 6 7

"...with their calls."

♩ = 60

(7) 12" 12" A

*fff* *mf*

Wait 5-10"

11 10

gliss. harmonic gliss down

Andante (♩ = 140)

*ff pochissimo marcato* *f* *mf*

gliss.

*f* *mp*

gliss.

"Digging hands..."

Andante (♩ = 160)

*mf* *ff*

Più mosso

*f* *mf*

gliss.

Pizz. 4''

*f* *mf*

In Time

*poco legato*

4''

*f* *ff*

$\text{♩} = 100$   
(still Pizz.)

*mp* *f*

*legato possibile*  
*l.v. possibile*

*f* *ff*

continue to  
cresc. *f* to *ff*  
after repeat

molto rit.

*ff*

♩ = 60 Arco Pizz. Arco Pizz.

*mf*

Wait 6-10" 8" 10"

Arco

*p* as loud as possible with plenty of resonance *mf*

10" 4" 10"

♩ = 80-90

*sim.* *mf* *gliss.* *ff*

3 3 3 5

*f* *ff*

"...sit shifting in the long..."

rit. . . . .

5/4

*G string behind the bridge*

Tempo Primo

*mf*

Senza Misura- over 5" each

*gliss.* *f*