

Kaena Point

for violin, viola, cello and piano

Nolan Stolz

Duration ca. 12.5'

STUDY SCORE

(performance score also available in 11"x17" size)

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Kaena Point was completed in Hartford, CT in 2008, but the compositional process began in July 2007 at Kaena Point on the the island of Oahu in Hawaii. Kaena Point is located on the northwesternmost point on the island. Highways follow the entire coastline except for the several miles known as Kaena Point. One can approach the area from either the “West Side” of the island or the “North Shore” by trail. This secluded part of the highly populated island of Oahu is unique in that one can view both shores, the West and the North, at once. It is often very windy at Kaena Point. One morning, during a visit to Kaena Point, I was inspired by the nature of the wind of the waves, and I set out to write a piano quartet to represent those images.

The piece opens with a soft piano pattern; it is harmonically blurred because then different pitches are heard. The pattern is seventeen notes long fitting into a single beat, which lasts approximately one and one-thirds seconds. The violin enters with a trill-like figure repeating the notes B-flat, C-flat and D-flat five times (totaling fifteen notes) into a single beat. Next, the viola enters with the trill-like figure, but at a slower pace: the three-note figure is played just four times within a beat (twelve notes), and also transposed down a perfect fourth (F, G-flat and A-flat). Finally, the cello at even a slower pace (three-note figure is played only three times within a beat (nine notes), and is transposed to D, E-flat and F. Although the entrances have a feeling of slowing down, the polyrhythm between the instruments (9:12:15:17) become more complex, and therefore the texture becomes denser upon each entrance. Harmonically, this section is very blurred; eleven of the twelve notes of the chromatic scale are heard (only “A” is missing). The composite sound represents the wind at Kaena Point.

After introducing the note “A” and its minor third counterpart “C,” the piano transposes the motive to D-flat/B-flat. The instruments drop out their trill-like figures, leaving only the violin’s B-flat, C-flat, D-flat. The music begins to explore these three notes in various paces in relation to the bass note B-flat. The violin already at fifteen per beat, the cello enters with two per beat (quarter notes) as the piano is at six per beat. The piano increases to nine as the cello increases to three. The viola enters at four per beat and then increases to five per beat; the five-note pattern becomes an important motive later in the piece. The violin returns at fifteen per beat, with the cello, but with bow changes every three, so the effect is actually five. With the absence of polyrhythm, the five becomes so strong that

a true meter arises. The beat (half note) is divided into five (“tenth notes,” a.k.a. “eighth-note quintuplets”), but a metric modulation occurs where the “eighth-note quintuplet” becomes the eighth note of the new meter. The tempo previously at 44 BPM (beats per minute) has shifted to 55 BPM.

Before the 55 BPM is felt, faster music is heard in the piano (4/4, 110 BPM). This piano figure returns throughout the piece. Its regular reoccurrences represent the regularity of waves, in the sense that waves continuously reach the shoreline.

The string trio enters with violent figures. The pacing of the figures are varied, creating polyrhythmic activity. The quick changes in dynamics, technique, texture paired with the polyrhythms, the music is “modernist” in style, and is reminiscent of the “new complexity” school of composition. The music is fugal, and so the material is limited, repeated and rotated throughout the voices. Although the viola repeats the violin’s subject, it is a false fugue answer. The answer does not appear, actually, until m. 58 on the “and of 3” in the viola. The offsetting of the material causes tuplets over the beat and barline which causes another dimension to the music. This sound represents the crashing of the wave.

The “wind” music returns briefly at m. 80 in 6:9:15 polyrhythm. This time, however, the viola continues, and the music explores the relationship of its three notes (F, G-flat and A-flat) to the bass note B-flat. The wave returns at “E” and crashes, but this time with much simpler polyrhythmic activity. 3:4 is heard first, and then five motif from earlier interrupts the last of the “4” group,” creating a measure of 3/8. The violin answers the five motif in elision, and the viola and piano enter in elision. This creates 3/10 of a complete measure. Rather than using the modern notation of “irrational” time signature of 3/10, I used the traditional notation of 3/8 but with a brief metric modulation (“eighth note quintuplet” becomes the eighth-note), which immediately returns to 55 BPM. 3:4:5 polymeter is heard, with instruments rotating the rhythms. The dynamics aid in bringing out the priority of the lines.

The wave finishes its crash, and the “wind” music returns in 3:6:9 polyrhythm, but this time, the music explores the cello’s notes (D, E-flat and F) in and the B-flat bass note. This four note group has a strong tonal tendencies, for it contains the root, third, and fifth of a B-flat triad. The fourth, in common practice harmony, also has its tendencies. Rather than exploring their relationship to one another, as common practice harmony has done for so many years, this section explores the harmonic spectrum of these pitches, using techniques commonly associated with the “spectral” school of composition. Pitches, timbre, rhythm and dynamics in this section are related to the harmonic spectrum. For example, the cello is asked to play its A-flat one-sixth of a tone lower, which is the tuning of the seventh harmonic in the series. Other “out of tune” harmonics, such as the eleventh and the thirteenth are a quarter-tone flat, are heard. Many of the upper harmonics are heard in the piano, in a softer dynamic, and obviously in tempered tuning. The fundamentals are

heard in the piano, and *forte*. The repetitive nature of these figures is reminiscent of the “minimalist” school of composition, so the section is both spectral and minimalist in approach.

The wind does not return at rehearsal “G”; the piano’s “wave” motif is heard followed by the crashing of a wave, again as 3:4:5 polyrhythm, but this time with the piano doubling one of the rhythms. After six measures, the polyrhythm accelerates to 4:5:6. After six measures, the polyrhythms are split [e.g. in the first beat of m. 191, the viola has the first three of the 6 rhythm. In the second beat, the 3rd and 4th notes of the 4 rhythm are heard. The third beat begins with the first two of the 4 rhythm, but is interrupted by the 3rd, 4th and 5th notes of the 5 rhythm). The meter is notated in 4/4 (instead of 2/2 like it was earlier for the similar music) because the splitting of the polyrhythms.

Rehearsal “H” explores the sound of the wave motif. It stretches the three-measure motif to forty-three measures. Like in electronic music composition when one uses granular synthesis for time stretching without the loss of quality or lower pitch. It slowly moves through the “sample” (the wave motif) exploring its characteristics. It also explores the bass notes’ harmonic spectra, explaining the microtonal notes in the strings. At rehearsal “I,” the wave motif is repeated (at normal speed), and the wave crashes into a 5:6:7 polyrhythm. It accelerates to 6:7:8, to 7:8:9 and to 8:9:10. It morphs into the “wind” music in a 7:9:12:13.6 polyrhythm (the 13.6 is notated as 17:20). A metric modulation occurs, returning to the original tempo of 44 BPM. The 12 becomes 15 and the 13.6 (17:20) becomes 17, so the pace of the violin and piano sound exactly the same. The ratios of change in the viola and cello are inexact and approximated [i.e. the viola’s 9 slightly speeds up to 12, and the cello’s 7 slightly speeds up to 9].

The same metric modulation heard just before rehearsal “C” returns, and the tempo is again at 55 BPM. At “L,” the wave motif returns, this time with the strings accenting the chords. The wave crashes in its most violent state yet, this time with piano added to the texture. The energy quickly calms, the texture thins, and the wave comes to a rest.

Nolan Stolz May 2008

String parts and performance score for the pianist are available from the publisher.

5

Vln. *(p)* 15 15 (sul pont.) ord. 15 15 ord. 15 15

Vla. ord. 12 12 sul pont. 12 12 ord. 12 12

Vc. flautando sul pont. 9 9 9

Pno. *(pp)* 17 17 17 17 17 17

8

Vln. (ord.) 15 15 (flautando) sul pont. sempre ord. (sul pont.) 15 15

Vla. (ord.) 12 12 (flautando) sul pont. sempre ord. (sul pont.) 12 12

Vc. ord. 9 9 (flautando) sul pont. sempre ord. (sul pont.) 9 9

Pno. 17 17 17 17 17 17 if a rest is needed, omit the "cue" sized notes *(pp)* 17

ff tre corde *pp* una corda

Musical score for measures 11-13. The score is arranged in four systems: Violin (Vln.), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Piano (Pno.).

- Vln.:** Measures 11-13. Dynamics: *(p)* in measures 11-12, *(p)* in measure 13. Fingering: 15.
- Vla.:** Measures 11-13. Dynamics: *(p)* in measures 11-12, *(p)* in measure 13. Fingering: 12.
- Vc.:** Measures 11-13. Dynamics: *(p)* in measures 11-12, *non cresc.* in measure 13. Fingering: 9.
- Pno.:** Measures 11-13. Dynamics: *(pp)*. Fingering: 17. Performance instructions: *ff* tre corde (measure 11), *pp* una corda (measure 12), *sim.* (measure 13).

if a rest is needed, omit the "cue" sized notes

Musical score for measures 14-16. The score is arranged in four systems: Violin (Vln.), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Piano (Pno.).

- Vln.:** Measures 14-16. Dynamics: *p*. Fingering: 15.
- Vla.:** Measures 14-16. Dynamics: *p*. Fingering: 12.
- Vc.:** Measures 14-16. Fingering: 9.
- Pno.:** Measures 14-16. Fingering: 17. Performance instructions: *ff* tre corde (measure 14), *pp* una corda (measure 16).

Musical score for measures 17-19. The score includes parts for Violin (Vln.), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Piano (Pno.).

- Vln.:** Measures 17-19. Dynamics: *(p)* at the start, *non cresc.* in measure 18. Rehearsal marks 15.
- Vla.:** Measures 17-19. Dynamics: *(p)* at the start, *non cresc.* in measure 18. Rehearsal marks 12. Instruction: "if a rest is needed, omit the 'cue' sized notes".
- Vc.:** Measures 17-19. Dynamics: *(p)* at the start, *p* in measure 18, *mf* in measure 19. Rehearsal marks 9.
- Pno.:** Measures 17-19. Dynamics: *(pp)* at the start, *p* in measure 18, *mf* in measure 19. Rehearsal marks 17. Includes *ff* *tre corde* and *pp* *(tre corde)* markings.

Musical score for measures 20-22. The score includes parts for Violin (Vln.), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Piano (Pno.).

- Vln.:** Measures 20-22. Rehearsal marks 15.
- Vla.:** Measures 20-22. Rehearsal marks 12. Instruction: "if a rest is needed, omit the 'cue' sized notes".
- Vc.:** Measures 20-22. Dynamics: *p* at the start, *p* in measure 21, *p* in measure 22. Rehearsal marks 9.
- Pno.:** Measures 20-22. Dynamics: *p* at the start, *(p)* in measure 21, *p* in measure 22. Rehearsal marks 17. Includes *ff* marking.

22

Vln. *(p)* 15 15 15 15 15

Vla. *(p)* 12 12 12 12 12

Vc. *(p)* 9 9 9 9 9

Pno. *(p)* 17 17 17 17 17

p *sim.* *ff*

23

Vln. *(p)* 15 15 15 *mf* 15 15 15

Vla. *(p)* 12 12 12 *mf* 12 12 12

Vc. 9 9 9 *(p)* 9

Pno. 17 17 17 17 17 17

(sul pont.) *ord.* *(sul pont.)* *ord.* *(sul pont.)*

10

if a rest is needed, omit the "cue" sized notes

Vln. *(mf)* 15

Vla. *(mf)* 12

Vc. *mf* 9

Pno. *(p)* 17

ff

Vln. *(mf)* 15

Vla. *(mf)* 12

Vc. *(mf)* 9

Pno. *p* 17

ff

p *(ord.)*

31

Vln. *(p)* 15 15 15 15 *(p)* 15 *mp* 15

Vla. *(p)* 12 3

Vc. *(p)* 9

Pno. 17 17 17 *(p)*

flautando
ord.

flautando sempre (sul pont.)

ord.

ord.

pedal is still depressed

(normal bow pressure)
(sul pont.)

B

34

Vln. *p* 15 15 15 15

Vla. *pp* 15

Vc. *pp* 3 3 3 3

Pno. *mp cresc.* 3 3 3 3 *(mf)* 9 9

flautando
ord.

flautando sempre (sul pont.)

ord.

ord.

44

Vln. *(mf)* 15 15 15

Vla. *(mf)* 5 5 5

Vc. *(f)* 5 5 5

Pno. *(f)* 15 15 15

Tempo II $\text{♩} = 55, \text{♩} = 110, \text{♩} = 220$

sim.

49

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Pno. *(f)*

C

Musical score for measures 52-56, featuring Violin (Vln.), Viola (Vla.), and Violoncello (Vc.) parts. The piano part (Pno.) is present but contains no notation. The score includes various dynamics such as *ff*, *mf*, and *f*, along with performance instructions like *pizz.*, *arco*, *sul pont.*, and *ord. flautando*. Measure numbers 52, 53, 54, 55, and 56 are indicated at the beginning of their respective staves.

Musical score for measures 57-61, featuring Violin (Vln.), Viola (Vla.), and Violoncello (Vc.) parts. The piano part (Pno.) is present but contains no notation. The score includes various dynamics such as *mf*, *f*, *ff*, and *mp*, along with performance instructions like *ord.*, *col legno*, *arco*, *pizz.*, *sul pont.*, and *ord. flautando*. Measure numbers 57, 58, 59, 60, and 61 are indicated at the beginning of their respective staves.

Musical score for measures 75-80. The score includes staves for Violin (Vln.), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Piano (Pno.).

- Vln.:** Starts at measure 75 with a forte (*f*) dynamic. Features sixteenth-note patterns with slurs and accents. Ends at measure 80 with a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic and a sixteenth-note run.
- Vla.:** Starts at measure 75 with a forte (*f*) dynamic. Features sixteenth-note patterns with slurs and accents. Ends at measure 80 with a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic and a sixteenth-note run.
- Vc.:** Starts at measure 75 with a forte (*f*) dynamic. Features sixteenth-note patterns with slurs and accents. Ends at measure 80 with a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic and a sixteenth-note run.
- Pno.:** Starts at measure 75 with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. Features sixteenth-note patterns with slurs and accents. Ends at measure 80 with a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic and a sixteenth-note run.

Measure numbers 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, and 80 are indicated. Dynamics include *f*, *mf*, and *ff*. Fingerings (5, 6, 9) and slurs are present. A *ff* dynamic is also indicated for the piano part at the end of measure 80.

Musical score for measures 81-86. The score includes staves for Violin (Vln.), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Piano (Pno.).

- Vln.:** Starts at measure 81 with a *dim.* dynamic, followed by *f*, *mf*, *mp*, *p*, and *pp*. Features sixteenth-note patterns with slurs and accents. Ends at measure 86 with a *pp* dynamic.
- Vla.:** Starts at measure 81 with a *dim.* dynamic, followed by *f*, *mf*, *mp*, *p*, and *pp*. Features sixteenth-note patterns with slurs and accents. Ends at measure 86 with a *pp* dynamic.
- Vc.:** Starts at measure 81 with a *dim.* dynamic, followed by *f*, *mf*, *mp*, *p*, and *pp*. Features sixteenth-note patterns with slurs and accents. Ends at measure 86 with a *pp* dynamic.
- Pno.:** Starts at measure 81 with a forte (*f*) dynamic. Features sixteenth-note patterns with slurs and accents. Ends at measure 86 with a mezzo-forte (*mp*) dynamic.

Measure numbers 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, and 86 are indicated. Dynamics include *dim.*, *f*, *mf*, *mp*, *p*, and *pp*. Fingerings (6, 9) and slurs are present. A *pp* dynamic is also indicated for the piano part at the end of measure 86. A *una corda* instruction is present at the end of measure 86, and a *tre corde* instruction is present at the end of measure 87.

90

Vln. *mp* *p* *flautando* *ord.* *(p)*

Vla. *mp* *p* *flautando* *ord.* *(p)*

Vc. *mp* *(mp)* *p* *ord.* *(p)*

Pno. *(f)* *mf* *mp* *f* *p* *ff*

100

Vln. *mp* *(mp)* *mf* *f*

Vla. *mp* *(mp)* *mf* *f*

Vc. *(p)* *mp* *pizz.* *f*

Pno. *ff* *(resonant)* *f*

l.h. inside piano muting strings

(lift left hand)

⌘ until rehearsal "E"

18

111

E

Vln. *ff*

Vla. *ff*

Vc. *f*

Pno. *f*

E

pizz. *p*

arco *p*

pizz. *p*

arco *p*

118

Vln. *arco* *pizz.* *arco* *mf* *f* *ff* *(ff) non dim.*

Vla. *pizz.* *arco* *p* *mf* *mp* *mf* *ff* *ff non dim. f sim.*

Vc. *pizz.* *arco* *mp* *mf* *mf* *f*

Pno. *f* *(f)*

(Tempo II)
 $\text{♩} = 55, \text{♩} = 220$ $\text{♩} = 275$ $\text{♩} = 55, \text{♩} = 220$

l.h. inside piano muting strings

l.h. inside piano muting strings

* if the frame design does not allow to mute this particular range, displace the unreachable notes up or down an octave

147

Vln. **F**

Vla. *f* *mf*

Vc. *f* *mf*

Pno. *ff* *mp* *mf*

155

Vln. $\downarrow 1/4$ tone *(mf)* $\downarrow 1/4$ tone $1/6$ tone lower than D \flat

Vla. $\downarrow 1/4$ tone $\downarrow 1/4$ tone $\downarrow 1/4$ tone $\downarrow 1/4$ tone

Vc. (II,III) $1/6$ tone lower than A \flat $\downarrow 1/4$ tone (II) $\downarrow 1/4$ tone $1/6$ tone lower than A \flat

Pno. *mf* *p* *mf* *mp* *mf* *mp* *f* *mf* *f*

163

↓ 1/4 tone

Vln. *(mf)* *f*

Vla. *(mf)* *f*

Vc. *(mf)* *f*

Pno. *mp* *mf* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f*

170

Vln. **G**

Vla. **G**

Vc. **G**

Pno. **G**

209

Vln. s.p. → ord. → sul pont.

Vla. pizz. *f* arco

Vc. *p* (*p*) (not harm.) 3 3

Pno. *p* (*p*)

220

Vln. pizz. 3 *f* pizz. 3 *f* arco *p* IV

Vla. 3 *p* arco II

Vc. pizz. 3 *ff* pizz. 3 *ff* arco *p*

Pno. *ff* *p* *p* *f* mute with left hand 3 3 3

246

Violin (Vln.)

Viola (Vla.)

Violoncello (Vc.)

Piano (Pno.)

Measures 246-251. The score features complex rhythmic patterns with frequent accents and slurs. Dynamics range from *fff* to *f*. Fingerings (5, 6, 7) and articulation marks (accents, slurs) are clearly indicated. The piano part includes triplets and complex chordal textures.

252

Violin (Vln.)

Viola (Vla.)

Violoncello (Vc.)

Piano (Pno.)

Measures 252-257. This section continues the complex rhythmic and dynamic patterns. Dynamics include *fff*, *f*, *mf*, and *ff*. The score is heavily marked with slurs, accents, and fingerings (3, 6, 7, 9). The piano part features prominent triplets and complex harmonic structures.

258

Vln. *f* *f* *fff* *fff* *ff* *mf* *f* *mf* *f*

Vla. *f* *fff* *fff* *f* *ff* *f* *mf* *mf* *mf*

Vc. *mf* *ff* *fff* *f* *ff* *mf* *f* *mf* *f* *mp*

Pno. *fff* *mf* *ff* *fff* *ff* *f* *mf* *f* *mf* *mp*

264

Vln. *mf* *p* *mp* *pp* *p*

Vla. *mp* *(mp)* *p* *mp* *p* *(pp)* *p*

Vc. *p* *pp* *p*

Pno. *p* *p* *sim.*

Tempo I $\text{♩} = 44$
 (12=15, so figure sounds exactly the same)

J $\text{♩} = 44$
 (9.6=12, so figure is slightly faster)

J $\text{♩} = 44$
 (7.2=9, so figure is slightly faster)

J $\text{♩} = 44$ (17:20=17, so figure sounds exactly the same)

sim.

sim.

Σ until measure 278
 una corda

28

Vln. *p* sul pont. 15 15 15 15 (ord.) 15 15

Vla. *p* 12 12 12 12 (ord.) 12 12

Vc. *p* 9 9 9 9 (ord.) 9 9

Pno. 17 17 17 17 17 17

ff tre corde

pp una corda

Vln. *p* sul pont. 15 15 normal bow pressure 15 15 flautando (sul pont.) 15 15

Vla. *p* sul pont. 12 12 normal bow pressure 12 12 flautando (sul pont.) 12 12

Vc. *p* sul pont. 9 9 normal bow pressure 9 9 flautando (sul pont.) 9 9

Pno. 17 17 17 17 17 17

pp *ff* tre corde

p una corda *sim.*

(flautando) → ord.

Vln. *(p)* 15 15 15 15 *mf* 15 *f* 5

Vla. *(p)* 12 12 12 12 *mf* 12 *p*

Vc. *(p)* 9 9 9 9 *mf dim.* 9 *(mp)* 9

Pno. *(p)* 17 17 17 17 *mf dim.* 17 *(mp)* 17
 (tre corde) *ff* una corda

Vln. *pp* 15: 15: 15: *f* 5 15 3 3 3 3 3

Vla. *f* 5 *pp* 6: 6: *f* 5 10

Vc. *(p)* 9 *pp* *f* 5 5 *f* 5 5 5

Pno. *(p)* 17 17 *pp* *f* 5 5 5 5
 (sim. *(p)*) *pp* (tre corde)

K Tempo II ♩ = ♩
J = 55, ♩ = 220

30

283

Vln. *f* *ff* **L** (a)

Vla. *f* *ff* **L** (a)

Vc. *f* *ff* **L** (a)

Pno. *f* *ff* **L** (a)

290

Vln. *mf* *ff* (b) (IV)

Vla. 7 7 7 7 6 7 7 7 7

Vc. 5 5 7 7 7 7 6 5 7

Pno. (b) (b) 3 *sfz*

Musical score for measures 305-318. The score is for Violin I (Vln.), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Piano (Pno.).

- Vln.:** Starts at measure 305 with an *arco* marking and a dynamic of *f*. It features several *9* (ninth) fingering indications. Dynamics range from *mf* to *ff*. The piece concludes with a *flautando* marking and a dynamic of *mp*.
- Vla.:** Starts at measure 305 with a dynamic of *ff*. It includes a *15* fingering and a *9* fingering. Dynamics range from *mf* to *ff*. It concludes with a *flautando* marking and a *pizz.* (pizzicato) marking with a dynamic of *ff*.
- Vc.:** Starts at measure 305 with a dynamic of *ff*. It includes a *sul pont.* marking with a $\downarrow 1/4$ tone instruction. Dynamics range from *mf* to *ff*. It concludes with a *flautando* marking and a dynamic of *ff*.
- Pno.:** Starts at measure 305 with a dynamic of *ff*. It features a *3* fingering and concludes with a dynamic of *ff*.

Musical score for measures 309-322. The score is for Violin I (Vln.), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Piano (Pno.).

- Vln.:** Starts at measure 309 with an *ord.* marking and a dynamic of *ff*. It includes a *flautando* marking and a *pizz.* marking with a dynamic of *ff*. Dynamics range from *mp* to *pp*. It concludes with a $\uparrow 1/4$ tone marking and a *hold as necessary* instruction.
- Vla.:** Starts at measure 309 with an *arco, flautando* marking and a dynamic of *mp*. It includes a *pizz.* marking and a *arco* marking with a dynamic of *ff*. Dynamics range from *mp* to *pp*.
- Vc.:** Starts at measure 309 with a dynamic of *ff*. It includes a *1/6 lower than F* instruction. Dynamics range from *mp* to *pp*.
- Pno.:** Starts at measure 309 with a dynamic of *ff*. It includes a *3* fingering and concludes with a dynamic of *pp*.