

Complete Crumb Edition, Volume 8

George Crumb

(b. 1929)

Makrokosmos, Volume I (35:15)

*Twelve Fantasy-Pieces after the Zodiac
for Amplified Piano*

Part One

- 1** 1 Primeval Sounds (Genesis I) *Cancer* (4:41)
- 2** 2 Proteus *Pisces* (1:21)
- 3** 3 Pastorale
(from the Kingdom of Atlantis, ca. 10,000 B.C.) *Taurus* (2:20)
- 4** 4 Crucifixus [SYMBOL] *Capricorn* (3:20)

Part Two

- 5** 5 The Phantom Gondolier *Scorpio* (2:51)
- 6** 6 Night-Spell I *Sagittarius* (4:32)
- 7** 7 Music of Shadows (for Aeolian Harp) *Libra* (2:31)
- 8** 8 The Magic Circle of Infinity
(Moto perpetuo) [SYMBOL] *Leo* (1:44)

Part Three

- 9** 9 The Abyss of Time *Virgo* (2:41)
- 10** 10 Spring-Fire *Aries* (1:29)
- 11** 11 Dream Images (Love-Death Music) *Gemini* (4:42)
- 12** 12 Spiral Galaxy [SYMBOL] *Aquarius* (3:03)

Makrokosmos, Volume II (31:33)

*Twelve Fantasy Pieces after the Zodiac
for Amplified Piano*

Part One

- 13** 1 Morning Music (Genesis II) *Cancer* (2:55)
- 14** 2 The Mystic Chord *Sagittarius* (2:42)
- 15** 3 Rain-Death Variations *Pisces* (1:32)
- 16** 4 Twin Suns
(Doppelgänger aus der Ewigkeit) [SYMBOL] *Gemini* (3:14)

Part Two

- 17** 5 Ghost-Nocturne: for the Druids of Stonehenge
(Night-Spell II) *Virgo* (2:00)
- 18** 6 Gargoyles *Taurus* (1:18)
- 19** 7 Tora! Tora! Tora! (Cadenza Apocalittica) *Scorpio* (2:02)
- 20** 8 A Prophecy of Nostradamus [SYMBOL] *Aries* (3:05)

Part Three

- 21** 9 Cosmic Wind *Libra* (2:16)
- 22** 10 Voices from "Corona Borealis" *Aquarius* (4:02)
- 23** 11 Litany of the Galactic Bells *Leo* (2:53)
- 24** 12 Agnus Dei [SYMBOL] *Capricorn* (3:34)

Robert Shannon
Piano

- 25** **Otherworldly Resonances (9:41)**
for Two Amplified Pianos
(premiere recording)

Quattro Mani
Susan Grace and Alice Rybak
Duo Pianists

Notes by George Crumb

Makrokosmos, Volume I was composed in 1972 for my friend David Burge. Ten years previously, in 1962 (we were then colleagues at the University of Colorado), he had commissioned and premiered my *Five Pieces for Piano*. I was very much excited about the expanding possibilities of piano idiom—it seemed as if a whole new world were opening up to composers; and I was especially impressed by Burge's immediate and total mastery of this new idiom, which implied an organic synthesis of conventional (keyboard) and unconventional (inside the piano) techniques. I wanted to do a sequel to the *Five Pieces* but, alas, several attempts proved abortive. One set of sketches was assimilated into my *Songs, Drones and Refrains of Death*; other ideas wandered homelessly through the years; and two or three germinal ideas finally evolved into *Makrokosmos*. In 1973 I completed *Makrokosmos, Volume II*, composed for the pianist Robert Miller. In both volumes, each of the twelve "fantasy-pieces" is associated with a different sign of the zodiac and with the initials of a person born under that sign.

The title and format of my *Makrokosmos* reflect my admiration for two great 20th-century composers of piano music—Béla Bartók and Claude Debussy. I was thinking, of course, of Bartók's *Mikrokosmos* and Debussy's *24 Preludes*. However, these are purely external associations, and I suspect that the "spiritual impulse" of my music is more akin to the darker side of Chopin, and even to the child-like fantasy of early Schumann.

And then there is always the question of the "larger world" of concepts and ideas which influence the evolution of a composer's language. While com-

posing *Makrokosmos*, I was aware of certain recurrent haunting images. At times quite vivid, at times vague and almost subliminal, these images seemed to coalesce around the following several ideas (given in no logical sequence, since there is none): the "magical properties" of music; the problem of the origin of evil; the "timelessness" of time; a sense of the profound ironies of life (so beautifully expressed in the music of Mozart and Mahler); the haunting words of Pascal: "Le silence éternel des espaces infinis m'effraie" ("The eternal silence of infinite space terrifies me"); and these few lines of Rilke: "Und in den Nächten fällt die schwere Erde aus allen Sternen in die Einsamkeit. Wir alle fallen. Und doch ist Einer, welcher dieses Fallen unendlich sanft in seinen Händen hält" ("And in the nights the heavy earth is falling from all the stars down into loneliness. We are all falling. And yet there is One who holds this falling endlessly gently in his hands").



Robert Miller, dedicatee of *Makrokosmos*, Vol. II

Makrokosmos, Volume I was premiered by David Burge at Colorado College (in Colorado Springs) on February 8, 1973. *Makrokosmos, Volume II* was premiered by Robert Miller in New York City (Alice Tully Hall) on November 12, 1974.

Otherworldly Resonances, completed in July of 2002, was composed for Susan Grace and Alice Rybak—the wonderfully gifted artists of Quattro Mani. Susan and Alice had performed all three of my earlier works involving two pianists (*Music for a Summer Evening*, *Celestial Mechanics* and *Zeitgeist*) and this new composition was intended as a kind of modest postscript to my catalog in this genre. I should mention too that the original idea of doing something new for this "dynamic duo" came from Becky Starobin of Bridge Records.



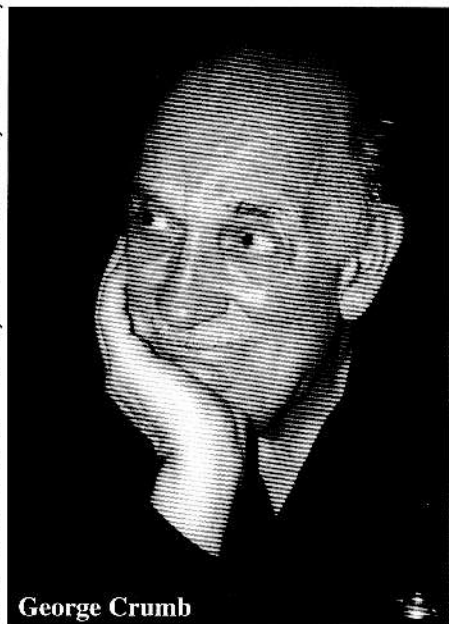
George Crumb and David Burge, dedicatee of *Makrokosmos*, Vol. I

Otherworldly Resonances is headed with the direction: "Very slowly, with a Zen-like intensity of concentration." The work does in fact demand extreme precision in its rhythmic and timbral nuances. All the various techniques of the "extended piano", which have characterized my piano writing since my *Five Pieces for Piano* of 1962, are revisited here and, I hope, given fresh meaning. The germinal pitch cell of *Otherworldly Resonances* is the four-note theme—E-flat, F, C-sharp, E-flat (occasionally expanded to five notes, with the addition of a G-sharp grace note before the C-sharp). This figure, which I call "ostinato mistico" in the score, is repeated throughout the piece (being played alternately by the two pianists). Everything else in the composition—contrasting motifs, decorative figurations, chord clusters, etc.—is super-imposed on this ostinato theme.

George Crumb

George Crumb's catalog of hauntingly beautiful scores has made him one of the most frequently performed living composers in today's musical world. Born in Charleston, West Virginia on October 24, 1929, Crumb studied at the Mason College of Music in Charleston and received his Bachelor of Music degree in 1950. Thereafter he studied for his Master's degree at the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana under Eugene Weigel. He continued his studies under Boris Blacher at the Hochschule für Musik, Berlin from 1954-1955, and received the D.M.A. in 1959 from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor after studying with Ross Lee Finney.

Crumb first taught theory and analysis at Hollins College, Virginia before being appointed as instructor and assistant professor in piano and composition at the University of Colorado, Boulder in 1958. From 1964-1965 he also acted



George Crumb

as creative associate/composer-in-residence at the Buffalo Center for the Creative and Performing Arts, State University of New York, Buffalo. In 1965 Crumb began a long association with the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia with his appointment as assistant professor and then full professor. Appointed the school's 'Annenberg Professor of the Humanities' in 1983, he retired from teaching in May, 1997.

Though George Crumb began composing as a teenager, he regards most of his early music as juvenilia, and has discouraged performances of these early compositions. Exceptions are *Three Early Songs* (1947) for voice and piano; *Sonata* (1955) for solo violoncello; and *Variazioni* (1959) for orchestra—the composer's doctoral thesis. In the 1960s and 1970s, George Crumb produced a series of compositions that were highly successful, earning the composer numerous international performances, recordings, and awards, including a Pulitzer Prize in 1968 and a Grammy Award in 2001. Many of these were vocal works based on the poetry of Federico Garcia Lorca, including *Ancient Voices of Children* (1970); *Madrigals, Books 1-4* (1965, 69); *Night of the Four Moons* (1969); and *Songs, Drones and Refrains of Death* (1968). Other major works from this period include: *Black Angels* (1970) for electric string quartet; *Vox Balaenae* (1971) for electric flute, electric cello and amplified piano; *Makrokosmos, Volumes I and II* (1972, 73) for amplified piano; *Music for a Summer Evening* (1974) for two amplified pianos and percussion; and Crumb's largest score—*Star-Child* (1977), for soprano, solo trombone, antiphonal children's voices, male speaking choir, bell ringers and large orchestra.

Crumb's recent works include: *Quest* (1994) for guitar and chamber ensemble; *Mundus Canis* (1998) for guitar and percussion; *Eine Kleine Mitternachtmusik* (2001) for amplified piano; *Otherwordly Resonances* (2002) for two amplified pianos; and the composer's most extended work to date, *American Songbook* (2002-2004), a series of four song cycles for singer, amplified piano and four percussionists, lasting more than two hours.



George Crumb

Robert Shannon

Robert Shannon has performed throughout the United States, Europe, South America and Asia. His repertoire ranges from J.S. Bach to John Adams, and he is especially noted for his penetrating interpretations of recent American music. Mr. Shannon has commissioned and championed many new compositions by today's leading composers, and his recordings have received rave reviews in the world press. Mr. Shannon has performed regularly at the Grand Teton Music Festival, the Festival Tibor Varga in Switzerland, at the Sacramento Festival of American Music and as guest artist with the Chicago Contemporary Chamber Players. In recent seasons he has appeared in London, Paris, Glasgow, Rome, Stuttgart, Hamburg, New York, San Francisco, Columbia (South America) and Taiwan.

Mr. Shannon, whose major teachers were Jack Radunsky, Ania Dorfmann and Dorothy Taubman, is a member of the piano faculty at the Oberlin Conservatory and is a Director of the Oberlin Festival and Competition. For Bridge Records Robert Shannon has recorded Ives's *Concord Sonata* and John Harbison's *Piano Sonata, No. 1* (BRIDGE 9036); Ives's complete works for violin and piano (BRIDGE 9024A/B); a disk of keyboard works by Tod Machover (BRIDGE 9040); George Crumb's *Celestial Mechanics* and *Processional* (BRIDGE 9113); and Crumb's *Gnomic Variations* and *Four Nocturnes* (BRIDGE 9127).



Robert Shannon

Quattro Mani

Pianists **Susan Grace** and **Alice Rybak** bring together two distinguished careers. Each has earned recognition as a soloist and chamber musician in the United State and abroad. Both artists share a special interest in the vast repertoire for two pianos and the unique collaboration involved in its performance. Quattro Mani's special interest in twentieth century repertoire has led to collaborations with such composers as George Crumb, Joan Tower and Frederic Rzewski and to participation in contemporary music festivals throughout the USA, Latin America and Europe. In January 2001, the duo made its New York debut in Carnegie's Weill Recital Hall to a sold-out house. The duo has been re-engaged each year since.

Quattro Mani's debut CD, *A Game of Go*, was released on the Klavier label. Of this CD *Fanfare* writes: "Grace and Rybak play all of this music with power and intelligence, shaping large expressive phrases. Quattro Mani's blistering performance forms the beating heart of an arresting recital." Quattro Mani's recording of George Crumb's music for two pianos was issued by Bridge Records (BRIDGE 9105), and immediately nominated as "Best Chamber Music CD of the Year" at the Cannes Classic Awards. This CD received *Fanfare's* 'Critics Choice' and 'Highest Rating' from France's *Repertoire* and *ClassicsToday.com*. Speaking about Quattro Mani, the Pulitzer Prize-winning Crumb writes: "The duo piano team Quattro Mani is one of the very finest I have heard. Susan Grace and Alice Rybak are wonderful artists and their performances are both technically and musically superb."



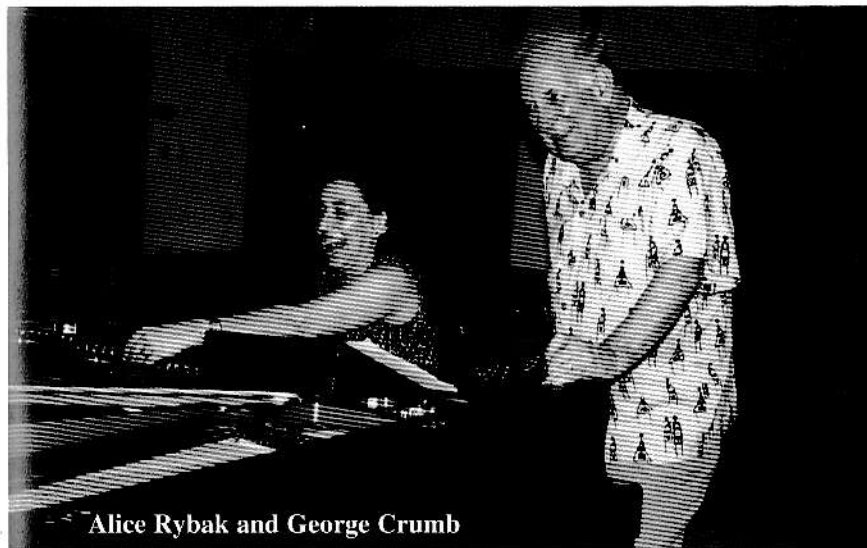
Quattro Mani: Alice Rybak & Susan Grace

Susan Grace, Director of the Colorado College Summer Music Festival, has appeared as a soloist with orchestras in the United States, Europe, the Soviet Union, and China. She has performed in numerous series and festivals, including the Phillips Collection in Washington, D.C., Music at Oxford, and the Helmsley Festival in England. She has recorded for Belgium National Radio, WFMT radio in Chicago, the Society of Composers, and Wilson Audio. Grace has performed with cellist Janos Starker, violinists Martin Chalifour, Glenn Dicterow and Jose-Luis Garcia, clarinetist David Shifrin, soprano Martile Rowland, and many other internationally known musicians. She is a lecturer in music and an artist in residence at Colorado College.

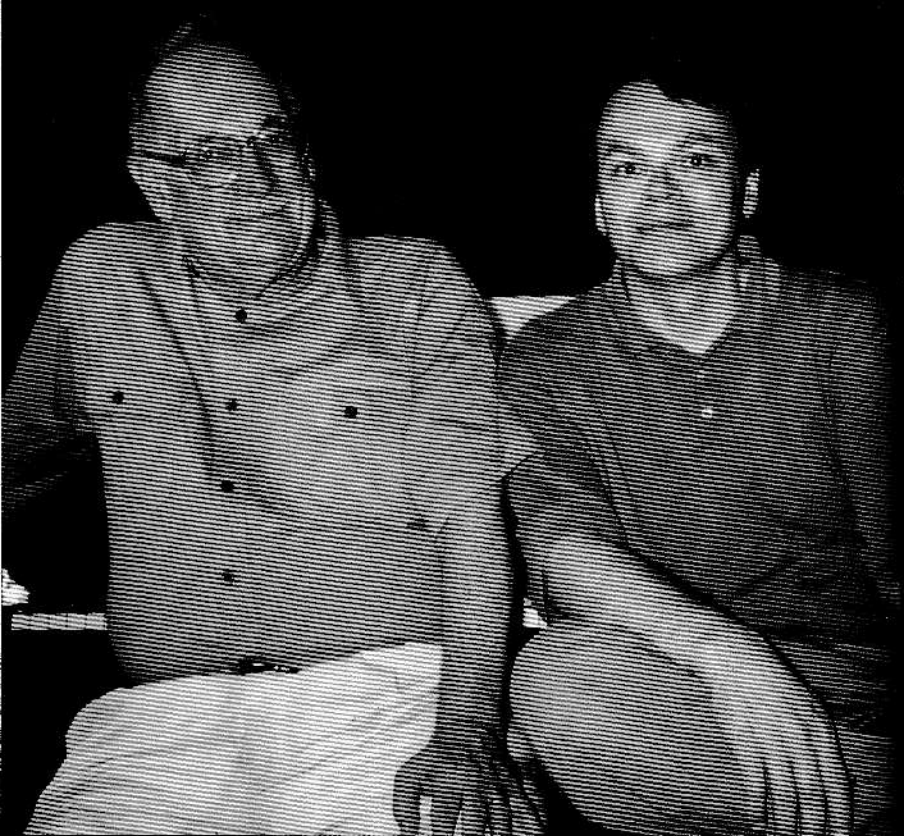


Susan Grace and George Crumb

Alice Rybak has performed throughout the U.S.A., including appearances with the Denver Symphony, the Amarillo Symphony, and the National Repertory Orchestra, as well as at New York's Town Hall, the 92nd Street Y, and on WNYC Radio. Rybak has performed with violinists Dylana Jenson and Sergiu Schwartz, and Metropolitan Opera mezzo-soprano Judith Christin. She studied at the Juilliard School and Indiana University School of Music. She has toured India, Thailand and Malaysia under the auspices of the State Department Artistic Ambassador program. Rybak is on the faculty of the Lamont School of Music at the University of Denver.



Alice Rybak and George Crumb



George Crumb and Robert Shannon

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Executive Producer: Becky Starobin

Engineers: Adam Abeshouse (*Makrokosmos*) and Michael Grace (*Otherworldly Resonances*)

Editor: Silas Brown

Mastering Engineer: Adam Abeshouse

Design: Alexis Napoliello

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School of Music, The University of Denver, Denver, Colorado in August 2003.

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GEORGE CRUMB EDITION

Volume One BRIDGE 9028

Apparition Jan DeGaetani, mezzo-soprano; Gilbert Kalish, piano

A Little Suite for Christmas, A.D. 1979 Lambert Orkis, piano
Songs, Drones and Refrains of Death Sanford Sylvan, baritone; Speculum Musicae

Volume Two BRIDGE 9069

Quest David Starobin, guitar; Speculum Musicae

Federico's Little Songs for Children Susan Narucki, soprano; Speculum Musicae
Night Music I (1976 revision) Susan Narucki, soprano; Speculum Musicae

Volume Three BRIDGE 9095

Star-Child Susan Narucki, soprano; Joseph Alessi, trombone
Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra and Choirs; Thomas Conlin, conductor

Mundus Canis David Starobin, guitar; George Crumb, percussion
Three Early Songs Ann Crumb, soprano; George Crumb, piano

Volume Four BRIDGE 9105

Zeitgeist, Music for a Summer Evening

Quattro Mani; John Kinzie, David Colson, percussion

Volume Five BRIDGE 9113

A Haunted Landscape Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra; Thomas Conlin, conductor

Celestial Mechanics Haewon Song, Robert Shannon, pianos

Processional Robert Shannon, piano; *Easter Dawning* Don Cook, carillon

Volume Six BRIDGE 9127

Lux Aeterna, Pastoral Drone, Four Nocturnes, Gnostic Variations, Echoes of Time and the River

Jan DeGaetani, mezzo-soprano; Penn Contemporary Players; Richard Wernick, cond.

Gregory D'Agostino, organ; Robert Shannon, piano; Gregory Fulkerson, violin

Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra; Thomas Conlin, conductor

Volume Seven BRIDGE 9139

Unto the Hills, Black Angels

Ann Crumb, soprano; Orchestra 2001; James Freeman, conductor; Miró Quartet