

GEORGE CRUMB

(b. 1929)

Disc A

A JOURNEY BEYOND TIME (American Songbook II) (36:58)

Songs of Despair and Hope
A Cycle of Afro-American Spirituals
for Voice, Percussion Quartet and Amplified Piano

- 1 I. Swing Low, Sweet Chariot (5:49)
- 2 II. Joshua Fit de Battle ob Jerico (3:16)
- 3 III. Steal Away (5:15)
- 4 IV. Oh, a-Rock-a My Soul (1:28)
- 5 V. The Pregnant Earth: A Psalm for Noontide
(Instrumental Interlude) (3:06)
- 6 VI. Sit Down, Sister (1:48)
- 7 VII. Nobody Knows de Trouble I See (4:01)
- 8 VIII. Go Down, Moses (5:17)
- 9 IX. Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child (6:53)

Barbara Ann Martin, soprano
Orchestra 2001

Marcantonio Barone, piano; William Kerrigan, percussion 1
Susan Jones, percussion 2, David Nelson, percussion 3
Angela Nelson, percussion 4,
Michael Driver, shofar (Mvt. 2)
James Freeman, conductor

Disc B

THE WINDS OF DESTINY (American Songbook IV) (45:29)

Songs of Strife, Love, Mystery and Exultation
A Cycle of American Civil War Songs, Folk Songs, and Spirituals
for Voice, Percussion Quartet and Amplified Piano

- 1 I. Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory (7:45)
- 2 II. When Johnny Comes Marching Home (5:54)
- 3 III. Lonesome Road (3:06)
- 4 IV. Twelve Gates to the City (2:55)
- 5 V. De Profundis: A Psalm for the Night-Wanderer
(Instrumental Interlude) (3:32)
- 6 VI. All My Trials (Death's Lullaby) (5:15)
- 7 VII. Go Tell it on the Mountain! (4:51)
- 8 VIII. The Enchanted Valley (4:48)
- 9 IX. Shenandoah (7:19)

Barbara Ann Martin, soprano
Orchestra 2001

Marcantonio Barone, piano; William Kerrigan, percussion 1
Susan Jones, percussion 2, David Nelson, percussion 3
Angela Nelson, percussion 4

James Freeman, conductor

Notes by Eric Bruskin

Introduction¹

George Crumb's *AMERICAN SONGBOOKS* began as a set of Appalachian songs in response to his daughter Ann's request for some folk song settings. Ann is a singing actress with Broadway experience, and her request would seem to have taken her father a little far afield stylistically. But George found himself quite at home with American folk songs, and the single set grew to a cycle of four "volumes" which was then extended to six. At about 40-45 minutes each, the *SONGBOOKS* comprise more than 4 hours of music—not only Crumb's most extended work by far, but also the largest song cycle in the history of Western music.

Most of Crumb's other works inhabit a musical world fashioned completely out of original material. But in the *SONGBOOKS*, Crumb sets the familiar folk tunes "straight, [so as] not to harm those wonderful melodies, to stay out of the way of those beautiful tunes." The instrumental accompaniment reflects the delicacy and robustness of the original material. The piano is amplified to enhance its expressive range and percussive potential, and serves Crumb as a "true bass" foundation for the percussion quartet, in which four people play over 100 instruments (in each cycle; about 150 across the six *SONGBOOKS*). The instruments span five continents, and the timbral range and nuance are extraordinary, even for Crumb: not just gongs, but Chinese opera gongs, Chinese temple gongs and a Balinese gamelan gong; not just bells, but Japanese temple bells, Indian camel bells, Indian ankle bells, a Thai wooden buffalo bell, sleigh bells, Almenglocken and a bell tree; also Tibetan prayer stones, Philippine "devil chasers," a Kenyan shaker, a Cameroun pod rattle, a Vietnamese frog, a cricket voice, a lion's roar, and enough drums, rattles and wooden objects to supply a small army.

The use of world instruments to accompany American folk songs makes perfect sense to Crumb. "Philosophically, I think of all music as being interrelated. I once wrote [in 1980] that I was haunted by the thought that all the many musics of the world are coming together as one. I think that's happened . . . the instruments or the musics of other cultures are a possible source for me as a composer." By setting folk songs into this sound world, Crumb unites two twentieth-century tendencies: first, the integration of one's own native folk elements into the Western classical musical tradition, as with Mahler, Bartók, and Ives; and second, the incorporation of other "world musics" into that same language, as with Debussy and Messiaen.

One consequence of this is that different aspects of the music combine to accommodate different expressive viewpoints simultaneously. "I guess my music always has this kind of dual sense about it. Maybe it comes from some of the models I've followed. I hear this quality in Mahler's music. There is sometimes kind of a folk-like quality, and yet underneath there is an underlying irony that is implied in his music. I find that the music I love most always seems to have both sides to it."

In the *American Songbooks*, George Crumb, surrealist, transforms himself into George Crumb, magical realist. Magical Realism, in its literary sense, is "the transformation of the common and the everyday into the awesome and the unreal." Or as Crumb himself puts it, "if it changes the listener's view of the folk songs, then perhaps I've succeeded."



The Songs of "A Journey Beyond Time"

I. Swing Low, Sweet Chariot

*Swing low, sweet chariot,
Comin' for to carry me home.
I looked over Jordan, and what did I see?
Comin' for to carry me home.
A band of angels 'comin after me,
Comin' for to carry me home.
If you get there before I do,
Comin' for to carry me home.
Tell all my friends I'm comin' there too,
Comin' for to carry me home.
Swing low, sweet chariot,
Comin' for to carry me home.*

"Solemnly, with nobility," is the performing indication. "Swing Low" is an anticipation of either death or deliverance from slavery. Crumb's setting accommodates multiple layers of meaning as well. After the opening chimes, we hear a gentle oscillation. (Crumb: "I save the Japanese Temple Bells for the most mysterious moment ... to invoke something profoundly mysterious.") In the outer verses, the melody appears in multiple canon, perhaps evoking a procession of slaves, one following the other to freedom – or to heaven. In the two middle verses, the accompaniment seems to follow the plain meaning of the text, descending and ascending like the chariot itself. If you listen closely, though, ghostly echoes of the canons are still there.

II. Joshua Fit de Battle ob Jerico

*Joshua fit de battle ob Jerico, Jerico, Jerico,
Joshua fit de battle ob Jerico, an' de walls come tumbelin' down!*

*You kin' talk about yo' king ob Gideon,
You kin' talk about yo' man ob Saul,
But dere's none like good ole Joshua
At de battle ob Jerico.*

Dat mornin' Joshua fit de battle ob Jerico ...

*Up to de walls ob Jerico,
Dey marched wid spear in han'.
Go blow dem ram horns, Joshua cried,
'cause de battle am in my han'.*

Dat mornin' Joshua fit de battle ob Jerico ...

*Den de lam' ram sheephorns begin to blow,
De trumpets begin to soun',
Ole Joshua commanded de chillen to shout
An de walls come tumblin' down.*

Dat mornin' Joshua fit de battle ob Jerico ...

"Vivace, furioso." Set in 4/16 time with syncopations and subdivisions of the beat, this music looks formidable on the page. "I wanted a page that looked rather black [i.e., dark with the thick beams and flags of small note values], because psychologically that suggested

a battle piece.... I wanted to get the sense that it's energized in those little notes." A metallic arsenal includes a Chinese Opera Gong, a flexitone, the metal crossbeams of the piano's "harp," a thunder sheet, cymbals and tam tams, and the wooden battery includes tom toms, roto toms, log drums, bongo drums, conga drums and bass drums. The piano is a battle instrument here, making all manner of threatening sounds, but the *coup de grace* is an actual shofar whose blasts brought the wall down!

III. Steal Away ²

*Steal away, steal away,
steal away to Jesus;
Steal away, oh, steal away home,
I ain't got long to stay here.*

*My Lord calls me,
He calls me by the thunder,
The trumpet sounds within-a my soul,
I ain't got long to stay here.*

*Green trees a-bendin',
Poor sinner stands a-tremblin',
The trumpet sounds within-a my soul,
I ain't got long to stay here.*

*Steal away, steal away,
steal away to Jesus;
Steal away, oh, steal away home,
I ain't got long to stay here.*

"Languidly, senza misura." As with "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot," "Steal Away" encodes Underground Railroad instructions within an intimation of death. A ghost world of metallic sounds (Chinese Cymbals and Temple Gong, Indian Camel Bells and Ankle Bells, Caribbean Steel Drum, tubular bells, cymbals, wind chimes, tam-tam and struck and bowed vibraphones) escorts the departing soul. The only fibrous sound here is the Cameroun Pod Rattle at the beginning and end. Interestingly, all of the *gruppetti* are multiples of five (rapid groups of 5, 10, or 15 notes), some bracketed by various groups of three. This might not otherwise be noteworthy, but a consistent use of certain numerical groupings (often 7, 11 or 13) is evident in other Crumb works.

IV. Oh, a-Rock-a My Soul

*Oh, a-rock-a my soul, In de bosom of Abraham,
Oh, a-rock-a my soul, In de bosom of Abraham,
Oh, a-rock-a my soul, In de bosom of Abraham,
Oh, a-rock-a my soul.*

*When I went down in the valley to pray, O, rock-a-my soul,
My soul got happy an' I stayed all day, ...
When I was a mourner jes' like you, ...
I mourned and mourned 'til I come through, ...*

The lively chorus contrasts with the ambivalent verse in several ways here. The chorus's syncopation is enhanced with an additional beat every other measure, whereas the verse is set rhythmically "straight." However, the verse's melody is altered with blue notes, which are double-flatted in the minor key. The major chorus is accompanied entirely by unpitched percussion, including three types of shakers (maraca, rubo and cabasa), whereas the verse's accompaniment chromatically intensifies the vocal line.

sounds: a Kenyan shaker, Appalachian “bones,” Philippine “devil chasers,” Chinese wood block, sandpaper blocks, Guiro, African talking drum, claves, maracas, marimba and rute (a bundle of sticks), along with Tibetan prayer stones, secco and muted piano.

VII. Nobody Knows de Trouble I See

*Nobody knows de trouble I see,
Nobody knows but Jesus;
Nobody knows de trouble I see,
Glory, glory hallelujah!*

*Sometimes I'm up, sometimes I'm down,
Oh, yes, Lord;
Sometimes I'm almost to de groun',
Oh, yes, Lord.*

*Altho' you see me goin' 'long so,
Oh, yes, Lord;
I have my trials here below,
Oh, yes, Lord.*

The performance instruction is “Slowly and gently (like a ‘cradle endlessly rocking’).” The quotation refers to Walt Whitman’s poem “Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking,” in which the poet listens to the song of a mockingbird as it laments its loneliness following the disappearance and presumed death of its mate. The “cradle endlessly rocking” in the poem is the sea, which is presumably responsible for the death of the mockingbird’s mate. In a similar manner, the singer of “Nobody Knows de Trouble I See” has accepted her fate even as she laments it, because she knows that Jesus had to do likewise. She can get through her day, her week, her life; but she is accompanied by the constant pain of (perhaps) a living death.

Musically, we can hear a rocking figure; a recurring four-note chord that appears as a halo at “Glory, glory hallelujah” and as a chorale at “Oh, yes, Lord;” and an occasional audible sigh of the wind. Perhaps the dissonant vibraphone that echoes the tubular bells evokes Charles Ives’ similar embellishment of slow hymn tunes. And as the singer’s mood rises momentarily in the initial lines of the second and third verses, so does the key of the melody (by a minor third, from D-flat to E).

Whitman is a poet associated with the American Transcendentalists. Ives deeply admired, and was inspired by, the Transcendentalists. George Crumb has been called a “radical transcendentalist.” One might note that Crumb has set Whitman before – in “Apparition – Elegaic Songs and Vocalises for Soprano and Amplified Piano” (1979), a cycle of meditations on death, excerpted from “When Lilacs In The Dooryard Bloom’d,” Whitman’s elegy for Abraham Lincoln. Crumb’s cycle was written for Jan DeGaetani, a beloved songbird of contemporary music, after she was diagnosed with the fatal illness that would take her life too soon thereafter. She sang it while carrying the burden of an inescapable fate.

VIII. Go Down, Moses

*When Israel was in Egyp' Lan'
Let my people go,
Oppressed so hard they could not stan',
Let my people go.
Go down, Moses, way down in Egyp' Lan,
Tell ol' Pharaoh to let my people go.*

*Thus spoke the Lord, bold Moses said,
Let my people go,
If not I'll smite your first-born dead,
Let my people go.*

Go down, Moses ...

*Go down, go down Moses, way down in Egyp' Lan,
Tell ol' Pharaoh to let my people go.*

The performing indication is "Dramatically; in an oracular, apocalyptic style." Each eleven-beat measure contains both theme and response: sometimes an chiming echo, sometimes a rumble of thunder. But perhaps even more dramatic is Crumb's evocation of the Lord's threat made manifest: the *Dies Irae* ("... when the Lord comes to judge ..."), which starts with the same four notes as the famous spiritual melody. One can almost feel fate closing in on Pharaoh as the mediaeval chant is echoed in double-time throughout the first verse; then later is played against itself as the threat is pronounced; and finally, at the end of each verse, is compressed in six stages from half-notes (at two seconds each) down to thirty-second notes (at eight per second) in a hellish, pealing reverse mensuration canon spread over six octaves of bells (if you include the piano).

IX. Sometimes I Feel Like A Motherless Child⁴

*Sometimes I feel like a motherless child,
Sometimes I feel like a motherless child,
Sometimes I feel like a motherless child,
A long, long way from home.*

*I wish I could fly like a bird in the sky,
I wish I could fly like a bird in the sky,
I wish I could fly like a bird in the sky,
A little closer to home.*

Motherless children have a hard time,

*Motherless children have a hard time,
Motherless children have a hard time,
A long way, a long way from home.*

Crumb's setting is a musical enfolding, reaching back to the opening of this cycle and, perhaps, also reaching out to one of the songs in his Appalachian Folksong cycle. The opening chords are a distant echo of the opening chords of the entire cycle, and the birdcall and rustlings that follow allude not only to the oscillating music in the first song, but also perhaps to similar gestures (birdsong on wooden instruments, rolling quintuplets in piano and vibraphone) in the song "Ten Thousand Miles" in *American Songbook III*. The opening figure is repeated before the final verse, and from this point on the dynamic level never rises above *pp*. The accompaniment grows sparse, the piano whispers a quietly poignant figure of three rising minor triads, the singer intones wordlessly, and the Japanese temple bells once again "invoke something profoundly mysterious."

The Songs of "The Winds of Destiny"

In *The Winds of Destiny*, the fourth and originally-intended final volume of his extraordinary *American Songbook*, Crumb completes two large-scale structural devices that span the initial four volumes. First, each of *Songbooks I-IV* is associated with a stage in the diurnal cycle: *The Winds of Destiny*, as the end of the cycle, is the nighttime. It opens on a moonlit battlefield, closes with a musical evocation of a starry night, and touches upon night and darkness at several other points throughout. Second, Crumb completes a tonal plan in which the song settings encompass all of the major keys from seven flats to seven sharps including enharmonic equivalents, and all of the minor keys likewise with enharmonic equivalents. In this Crumb pays tribute to his beloved Bach and Chopin and their respective monumental keyboard cycles.

I. Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory

*Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord;
He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored;
He has loosed the fateful lightning of his terrible swift sword;
His truth is marching on!*

*Glory, glory, Hallelujah!
Glory, glory, Hallelujah!
Glory, glory, Hallelujah!
His truth is marching on!*

*In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across the seas;
With a glory in His bosom that transfigures you and me;
As he died to make men holy let us die to make men free;
Our God is marching on!*

*Glory, glory, Hallelujah!
Our God is marching on*

“Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory” is better known as the “Battle Hymn of the Republic.” Crumb begins *The Winds of Destiny* after the battle is over—the performance indication is “Eerie, uncanny, spectral; like a deserted battlefield under full moonlight.” The strange opening sounds of the Aboriginal Thunder Stick, Vibraslap and Owl’s voice disorient; the accompaniment to the famously rhythmic verse is an utterly arhythmic chorus of four bass drums; and the “disembodied” vocal part is in C-flat major, the most darkly remote key in the tonal spectrum.

II. When Johnny Comes Marching Home

*When Johnny comes marching home again, Hurrah! Hurrah!
We'll give him a hearty welcome then, Hurrah! Hurrah!
The men will cheer, the boys will shout,
The ladies they will all turn out,
And we'll all feel gay
When Johnny comes marching home!*

*The old church bell will peal with joy, Hurrah! Hurrah!
To welcome home our darling boy, Hurrah! Hurrah!
The village boys and lassies say,
With roses they will strew the way,
And we'll all feel gay
When Johnny comes marching home!*

*Get ready for the Jubilee, Hurrah! Hurrah!
We'll give the hero three times three [cheers], Hurrah! Hurrah!
The laurel wreath is ready now
To place upon his royal brow,
And we'll all feel gay
When Johnny comes marching home!*

When Johnny comes marching home again, Hurrah! Hurrah! ...

Moving from moonlit C-flat major to the white-note clarity of A minor. In a notational signal to the performers, the time signature is 4/16 with each sixteenth-beat subdivided into 32nd-note triplets, giving the written page a dense, dark appearance. Crumb also uses this rhythm for “Joshua Fit be Battle,” another battle piece, in *American Songbook II*. But where *Joshua* is

triumphant, "Johnny" is bitterly ironic. The verse is accompanied by light wooden percussion that rattles and rasps like a skeletal army on the march; later this is transformed to a more sepulchral sound of membranous drums and tubular bells. (It could almost be called "Slouching Towards Gettysburg.") Most extraordinary, however, is Crumb's downward extension of his quartet of bass drums: a "Cannon Drum," consisting of a bass drum membrane fitted to a section of industrial heating duct several feet long and about two feet in diameter.

The grotesque excitement is cataclysmically shattered as the music literally explodes into splinters of percussion. In an ironic coda, Crumb introduces a fragment of the funeral march from Mahler's First Symphony (the famous "minor-key *Frère Jacques*"), whose melodic outline bears an underlying similarity to the first two phrases of "Johnny." This verse is in E-flat minor, Crumb's nod to the jarring effect of the E-flat minor recapitulation in Mahler's own D-minor movement.

III. Lonesome Road

*Look down, look down, that lonesome road,
Hang down your head and cry;
The best of friends must part some day,
But why should you and I?*

*Look down, look down, that lonesome road,
Hang down your head and cry;
If you would leave me for another,
Then why not let me die?*

"Lonesome Road" appeared in Carl Sandburg's 1927 collection, *American Songbag*, in an arrangement by the American avant-garde composer Ruth Crawford, with lyrics somewhat more bitter than the version set here. This desolate song of betrayal and loss is set with tender

simplicity, alternating the hollow fifths of emptiness (hinting melodically once again at the recurring modal figure) with warmer arpeggiated polychords in thirds. In the last line of the song, the fifths and thirds are intertwined, perhaps reflecting the emotional ambiguity of the conclusion.

IV. Twelve Gates to the City

*Oh, what a beautiful city,
Oh, what a beautiful city,
Oh, what a beautiful city,
There are twelve gates to the city, Alleluja!*

*Three gates to the East,
Three gates to the West,
Three gates into the North,
Three gates into the South, making that
Twelve gates into the city, Alleluja!*

Oh, what a beautiful city ...

*When I get to Heaven,
I'm going to sing and shout!
There ain't nobody up there
Who's going to put me out, you know there're
Twelve gates into the city, Alleluja!*

Oh, what a beautiful city ...

In the Bible, both Ezekiel (Chapter 48) and Revelations (Chapter 21) describe twelved-gated cities. These visions were a source of comfort and inspiration to African-American slaves in pre-Civil War America. Crumb's setting evokes joyous bustling crowds of people in the opening mallet music, soaring heights in the vibraphones and towering fourths in the bells under the singer's melisma on "alleluja," which appears with more elaborate modal alterations in later verses. The soaring vibraphone chords rhythmically echo the slow triplet of the word "beautiful" and melodically trace out a version of the diminished pentatonic figure from previous movements.

V. De Profundis: A Psalm for the Night-Wanderer (Instrumental Interlude)

At the center of each *Songbook* is an instrumental interlude that evokes the time of day in its title, its musical mood, and its visual "symbolic" notation. The musical staves of the interludes in the first three *Songbooks* are drawn in the shape of the solar disc and its rays. For this nocturnal interlude, the score is written in white notes on a black background., to extremely striking visual effect. Following a mysterious opening featuring various bent sounds, the piano and vibraphone each alternate a melodic fragment (to the rhythm of the words "de profundis") with musical figures harmonized by minor chords in contrary motion.

VI. All My Trials (Death's Lullaby)

*Hush, little baby don't you cry,
You know your Mama was born to die.
All my trials, Lord, soon be over.*

*The river of Jordan is muddy and cold,
It chills the body, but not the soul.*

All my trials, Lord, soon be over.

*There grows a tree in Paradise,
And the pilgrims call it, the tree of life.
All my trials, Lord, soon be over.*

Hush little baby, don't you cry ...

"All My Trials" opens with the sound of the Udu, a clay pot drum from Nigeria that is believed to represent ancestral voices in certain ceremonies there. This is just one of the subtle, delicate evocations of death (always a potent subject in Crumb's music) in this tenderly devastating song. Crumb, ever alert to melodic transformational possibilities throughout the entire *Songbook* cycle, reharmonizes the end of the melody with a deft Mahlerian touch, recharacterizing the cadential tonic as an aching poignant tritone. A melody in the vibraphone closely resembles "La luna está muerta, muerta..." (The moon is dead, dead...) from Crumb's own *Night of the Four Moons*. (Although it should be noted that whereas Crumb generally indicates explicit quotations from his own music, there is no such indication in the score at this point.)

VII. Go Tell it on the Mountain!

*Go tell it on the mountain,
Over the hills and ev'rywhere!
Go tell it on the mountain,
Our Jesus Christ is born!*

The shepherds kept their watching,

*O'er silent flocks by night,
When lo! throughout the heavens,
There shone a holy light.*

*The shepherds feared and trembled,
When high above the earth,
Rang out an angel chorus,
To hail our savior's birth.*

*And lo! When they had heard it,
They all bowed down to pray,
Then travel'd on together,
To where the baby lay.*

Go tell it on the mountain ...

The strong pentatonic cast of this jubilant tune is reflected in the rhythm of Crumb's setting, fitting the words to a brisk 5/8 by introducing new syncopations. In the second verse, the fives in the vibes are accented on every fourth beat; another vibraphone and tubular bells trace out a slower, rocking five, while the muted piano provides a pentatonic countermelody. In the middle verses, the main theme threads its way through the accompaniment in several simultaneous tempi; and though the soloist takes the melody into a harmonically more subdued submediant region, her excitement is betrayed by the fact that she skips one-and-a-half beats in every alternate measure. And in the final chorus, she tells it on the mountain quite literally, echoing mightily across the hilltops.

VIII. The Enchanted Valley *(Poem by Ann Crumb)*

In the valley of dark shadows

*Sing the lonely winds of night.
The moon is veiled in shrouds of mystery,
Hidden from the pale starlight.*

*The dogs of night are mournfully barking
For the lost souls' anguished lives.
Cicadas play on wings of sadness
And we hear their woeful cries.*

*The birds of night are watchfully waiting
In trees that touch the sky.
The willow branches bend with weeping
For the souls who soon will die.*

*In the valley of dark shadows
The moon is hidden still.
When will the secrets of the valley
Be revealed?
They never will, They never, never will.*

Here Crumb signs the enormous canvas of his *American Songbooks* with an original folksong with words by his daughter Ann, whose innocent request for some Appalachian folksong settings (which became *Unto the Hills*) unleashed this creative torrent. The words evoke night, darkness and death, set to a simple Dorian melody with an expressive flatted octave ornament that is its only chromatic inflection. By contrast, the only pitched material in the accompaniment is entirely chromatic: a single hollow tremoloed fifth, sliding inexorably downward throughout the verse, dragging the melody down with it as the key changes from c minor to b minor. The wail of the flexitone ("keening") and the twang of the jaw harp add to the mysterious, elusive quality of this song that seems to exist as much in the imagination as it does in physical sound.

IX. Shenandoah

*Oh, Shenandoah, I long to hear you,
Away, you rolling river.*

*Oh Shenandoah, I love your daughter,
Away I'm bound to go,
'Cross the wide Missouri.*

*'Tis seven long years since I last saw you,
Away, you rolling river.*

*Oh Shenandoah, I do adore her,
Away I'm bound to go
'Cross the wide Missouri.*

*Oh, Shenandoah, I'll come to claim her,
Away, you rolling river.*

*Oh Shenandoah, she's bound to leave you,
Away, I'm going away,
'Cross the wide Missouri.*

It's not entirely clear who Shenandoah is; in the literal sense of the song, Shenandoah was an Indian chief who lived along the Missouri River, and the song is sung by a sailor in love with his daughter. But the Shenandoah is also a river whose valley runs along the Appalachian Mountains along the eastern border of Crumb's native West Virginia, and given the resplendent musical setting with its overlapping waves of resonant metallic arpeggios, it's hard not to hear the song as Crumb's declaration of love to the natural wonder of his home country. He considers this a "transcendental folk song," and he should know.

The depth of Crumb's feeling here may be sensed in the performance indication: "Serenely majestic, like a larger rhythm of nature (luminous, incandescent; like van Gogh's 'Starry Night')." The multiple subdivisions of the beat recall Charles Ives' "rhythm of nature" in his unfinished *Universe Symphony*; the lavish layering of musical lines may be an aural translation of van Gogh's famously thick brushstrokes. The overlapping arpeggios are individually modal but combine into a shimmering total chromatic. But this is still the nighttime—except for the vocal line, almost nothing rises above an almost subliminally murmuring *pppp*. Large gongs and a rumbling figure in the lowest octaves of the piano are the only low sounds in the piece. And there are the Japanese Temple Bells, which Crumb reserves for moments of the most profound mystery. A massive terrestrial bell tolls once, and Crumb closes *American Songbook IV* at the river, where *Songbook I* began.

Eric Bruskin, program annotator for Orchestra 2001, has a BA in music from the University of Pennsylvania, and as a pianist, patron and writer is most interested in new music through the ages. He earns a living in various quantitative disciplines.

¹ This introduction is based on notes originally written for the premieres of Volumes I-IV. Versions of this essay and more detailed notes on *Songbooks I-VI* appear in notes to the Orchestra 2001 premieres, current and forthcoming Bridge CDs of the Songbooks featuring Orchestra 2001, and in George Crumb and the Alchemy of Sound: Essays on His Music, edited by Steven Bruns and Ofer Ben-Amots, Colorado College Music Press, Colorado Springs (2005)

² "Steal Away" is inscribed "In Memoriam Eugene Wolf," one of Crumb's colleagues in the music department at the University of Pennsylvania where both of them taught from the 1960s through the 1990s. Held in high esteem and great affection by those who knew him, studied with him and read his works, Gene Wolf "stole away," far too early, while Crumb was composing "A Journey Beyond Time."

³ "Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child" is inscribed "In Memoriam Claire Polin," a composer, flutist and musicologist whom Crumb first met at Tanglewood in the 1950s. She taught at Rutgers and lived in the Philadelphia area, where she was active in the musical community, inspiring affection among those who knew her personally and through her works.

⁴ And perhaps reminding the listener of Crumb's musical joke with repetition in "Gimme That Old Time Religion" in *American Songbook I*.

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Founded in 1988, **Orchestra 2001** (James Freeman, Artistic Director) has become one of America's most important champions of new music and one of Philadelphia's most active and ambitious cultural organizations. Orchestra 2001's dedication to performances of the highest quality has won for it devoted audiences at Philadelphia's new Kimmel Center for the performing Arts and at Swarthmore College where it is Ensemble in Residence. Invitations to perform at international festivals in Russia, Denmark, England, Spain, and Slovenia have resulted in triumphant successes for the orchestra and lavish praise from European critics. Its ongoing series of recordings for CRI, "Music of Our Time," has brought new American music (especially by composers from the Philadelphia area) to thousands of listeners in the U.S. and abroad.

From Left To Right: Angela Nelson, David Nelson, Barbara Ann Martin, George Crumb, William Kerrigan, Susan Jones, Marcantonio Barone, and James Freeman



Orchestra 2001's programs reflect the ensemble's primary mission: to bring the wonders of the music of the 20th and 21st centuries to wide audiences in world-class performances. Its guiding principle is that the best new music of our own time is a natural extension of the magnificent continuum of western art music and that it is no less powerful, compelling, beautiful, and accessible than the great masterpieces of previous centuries.

Many of the world's most renowned artists have appeared as soloists with the orchestra. They have included pianists Vladimir Feltsman, Gary Graffman, Gilbert Kalish, Yvonne Loriod-Messiaen, Marian McPartland, and Susan Starr; violinists Pamela Frank and Ani and Ida Kavafian; sopranos Julianne Baird, Maureen O'Flynn, Lucy Shelton, and Benita Valente; guitarists Sharon Isbin and David Starobin; and guest conductors Gunther Schuller, Bright Sheng, and Peter Schickele.

Recent highlights have included world premiere performances of works by George Crumb, David Crumb, Tina Davidson, David Finko, Gerald Levinson, Thea Musgrave, Jay Reise, Gunther Schuller; and operas by Jonathan Holland and Thomas Whitman.



When soprano **Barbara Ann Martin** made her Chicago Symphony Orchestra debut with Zubin Mehta in February, 1998, John von Rhein, in the *Chicago Tribune*, stated that she "met every vocal requirement with a technical command and vocal poise that made her a worthy successor to the late Jan De Gaetani...." The work was George Crumb's *Ancient Voices of Children*, and this collaboration with Zubin Mehta was repeated with the Berlin Philharmonic, the New York Philharmonics, the Vienna Symphony Orchestra, the Maggio Musicale, the Montreal Symphony, and with the Israel Philharmonic.

Barbara Ann Martin has performed throughout the United States and Europe, in Asia and the South Pacific. She has appeared at major music festivals such as Aspen, Boulder, Ravinia, Caramoor, Huddersfield and Salzburg, and has sung with orchestras and ensembles including the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, Speculum Musicae, The Orchestra of St. Luke's, the New World Symphony, and the American Composer's Orchestra. Her opera appearances include the Metropolitan Opera, Chicago (guest artist with the Lyric Opera Center), Central City, New Jersey State and Minnesota Operas. Ms. Martin's recordings feature works by Argento, Babbitt, Hovhaness, Husa, Rochberg, Thompson, Talma and Ung. In the fall of 1997, Ms. Martin joined George Crumb and Orchestra 2001 as a soloist in a tour of Russia and Denmark, and a documentary film of this tour was released in 2000. Ms. Martin has been a guest professor & Artist-in-Residence at the International Summer Academy Mozarteum in Salzburg, & the Royal Danish & Odense Conservatories

in Denmark, specializing in vocal technique, contemporary repertoire and American vocal music. She has served on the faculties of Bennington College, Brooklyn College, and Roosevelt University. She lives in the Chicago area, and is on the faculty of The Music Institute of Chicago, where she is Voice Department Chairman and Director of the Frank E. Little Adult Opera Workshop.

Ms. Martin received her undergraduate and graduate degrees from the Juilliard School of Music. She was a student of Florence Page Kimball and James Carson and coached and took master classes with Pierre Bernac, Fiora Contino, Martin Katz, Edwin MacArthur, Elizabeth Schwartzkopf, Jennie Tourel, and Marshall Williamson. On more than twenty recordings Ms. Martin has given world premieres by George Crumb, Augusta Read Thomas, Ilya Levinson, Pat Morehead, William Neil, Ralph Shapey and many others.

Barbara Ann Martin offers special thanks to Gail Hightower (African-American Dialect Coach), husband Jim Green, James Carson and Susan Charles.



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