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About the Music

THREE EARLY SONGS

The sins of one's youth are often recalled with feelings of either embarrassment or nostalgia or both, and rummaging through one's *juvenilia* can be an unsettling experience. Most of the music I wrote before the early sixties (when I finally found my own voice) now causes me intense discomfort, although I make an exception for a few songs which I composed when I was seventeen or eighteen. Of course it is possible that I am simply uncritical or indulgent toward these particular early efforts - the songs certainly lack technical sophistication and originality (although a shrewd analysis might reveal a few undeveloped "latent fingerprints").

I recall that the first readings of these songs were undertaken by my wife-to-be, Elizabeth Brown (the songs are dedicated to her. These little pieces stayed in my memory and when, some years ago, Jan DeGaetani expressed an interest in seeing them (with a view to possible performance if she liked them), I made a few slight revisions and even decided to have them published.

-George Crumb

NIGHT

• ROBERT SOUTHEY

How beautiful is night!
A dewy freshness fills the silent air;
No mist obscures, nor cloud, nor speck, nor stain
Breaks the serene of Heaven:
In full-orb'd glory yonder Moon divine
Rolls through the dark-blue depths.
Beneath her steady ray
The desert-circle spreads,
Like the round ocean, girdled with the sky.
How beautiful is night!

LET IT BE FORGOTTEN

• SARA TEASDALE

Let it be forgotten, as a flower is forgotten,
Forgotten as a fire that once was singing gold,
Let it be forgotten for ever and ever,
Time is a kind friend, he will make us old

If anyone asks, say it was forgotten
Long and long ago,
As a flower, as a fire, as a hushed footfall
In a long forgotten snow.

WIND ELEGY (W.E.W)

• SARA TEASDALE

Only the wind knows he is gone,
Only the wind grieves,
The sun shines, the fields are sown,
Sparrows mate in the eaves;

But I heard the wind in the pines he planted
And the hemlocks overhead,
"His acres wake, for the year turns,
But it is asleep," it said.

EINE KLEINE MITTERNACHTMUSIK

(Ruminations On 'Round Midnight By Thelonious Monk)

Eine Kleine Mitternachtmusik was composed in 2001 for pianist Emanuele Arciuli, who premiered the work in Italy and New York City. The composer's sly Mozartian allusion in the title reminds us of Crumb's fascination with night music throughout his career. A Little Midnight Music is, as the composer indicates, a set of nine "ruminations" on Thelonious Monk's 'Round Midnight.

1) Nocturnal Theme: Monk's familiar main tune drifts in quietly and hesitantly, heard above a hazy wash of tritone-related sounds in the lower register. As the theme fades, the pianist ends the movement by quietly striking the metal crossbeams using a yarn-covered mallet.

2) Charade: In the lowest register throughout are sustained major triads, beginning on E-flat and then gradually descending. Above the ringing bass triads are rapid rising and falling triplet figures that develop characteristic intervals from the theme: fourths, tritones, and seconds.

3) Premonition: The opening figure of Monk's tune alternates with an extremely soft, mysterious sequence of block chords.

4) Cobweb and Peaseblossom (Scherzo): Shakespeare's nocturnal fairies are evoked in a puckish assortment of quickly shifting staccato figures.

5) Incantation: The tempo is once again slow. Pale, dreamlike statements of the tune are repeatedly interrupted by agitated, loud passages that suggest nightmarish distortions of the opening few notes of Monk's melody.

6) Golliwog Revisited: One of Crumb's wittiest caprices, this movement is a deliberately grotesque parody of the cakewalk from the Children's Corner suite. Crumb even incorporates Debussy's nose-thumbing quotation of Wagner's Tristan und Isolde, topping it off with his own nod to Strauss's merry prankster, in the form of the opening theme from Til Eulenspiegel.

7) Blues in the Night: This movement comes closest to suggesting a familiar jazz style. The score quotes an old slang expression, “at sixes and sevens,” and the composer’s notation—using bars of six or seven main beats—reminds us of his longstanding attraction to numerology. As in the other movements, thematic ideas from Monk are transformed into characteristic Crumbian gestures.

8) Cadenza with Tolling Bells: Bell-like sonorities are everywhere in Crumb. The initial fortissimo ringing eventually gives way to the twelve strokes announcing the “advent of midnight,” during which the pianist counts aloud each stroke, gradually diminishing in volume from a shout to a stage whisper (“Mezzanotte!”).

9) Midnight Transformation: The introspective ballad tempo and the main tune return from the opening. This time, we recognize small details as the basis for the “ruminations” of the preceding movements. The tune is repeated a second time, down an octave, and it alternates with a slowly rocking triplet figure. The music floats dreamily, gradually disappearing into the night.

--Steven Bruns

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YODA & FRITZI FROM MUNDUS CANIS ("A DOG'S WORLD")

While contemplating the composition of a little dance piece for solo guitar for David Starobin (to be one of a series he was commissioning from several composers), I hit on the idea of creating a musical homage to the several dogs in my life. It occurred to me that the feline species had been disproportionately memorialized in music and I wanted to help redress the balance.

And so, the “piece for solo guitar” metamorphosed into a little suite of five canine humoresques, each being a portrait and a character study of one of the Crumb family dogs. I have always known that dogs, like their biped masters, have various and distinct personalities. The addition of a percussionist, who provides a specific instrumental color for each piece, helped me to delineate each canine character. In this film, David and I perform two of the pieces--“Yoda” and “Fritzi.”

“Yoda” was rescued from a New York City pound by my daughter Ann. He is a fluffy-white animal of mixed parentage (in which the bichon frise strain predominates) and mercurial temperament. The tempo marking for Yoda’s piece is *prestissimo possibile* and scurrying, scampering guitar passages are complemented by raspy guiro sounds and mounted castanets. But in an instant, all forgiven, Yoda plops in one’s lap!

“Fritzi’s” piece, marked *furioso* in the score, expresses a pronounced impetuosity and irrepressibility of spirit. The percussionist plays a frame drum and the guitar writing is virtuosic in style. Fritzi was a brown male dachshund of a lovable disposition despite his stubbornness and high-spirited antics.

--George Crumb

SIT DOWN, SISTER

This joyous gospel tune was part of Crumb’s *A Journey Beyond Time*, a cycle of Afro-American spirituals the composer wrote in 2003, originally for an ensemble of soprano, amplified piano and four percussionists. George and I made this arrangement for the George Crumb Ensemble, which has performed the piece as our encore on numerous occasions. --David Starobin

APPARITION

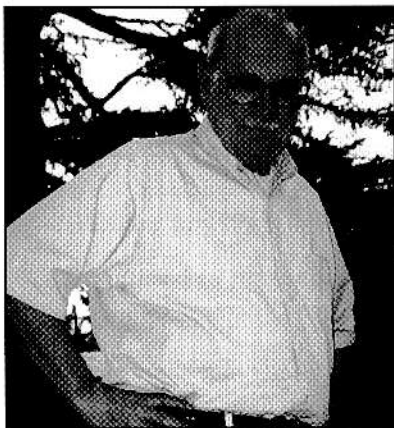
Written in 1979 for Jan DeGaetani and Gilbert Kalish, *Apparition's* text is extracted from Walt Whitman's "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd," part of a set of poems grouped under the title *Memories of President Lincoln*. Whitman wrote "When Lilacs..." during the weeks following the assassination of Lincoln, April 14, 1865. Although Whitman's poem is specifically an elegy to Lincoln, Crumb has chosen most of his text from a section subtitled "Death Carol." This is a pause in the direct reference to Lincoln, and contains some of Whitman's most imaginative writing on the experience of death.

In *Apparition*, each song and vocalise form a piece of a larger vision, eventually coalescing as a tableau. The literary and musical materials focus on concise, highly contrasting metaphors for existence and death. Yet Crumb's cycle offers reassurance. For just as in Whitman's verse, death is never depicted as an ending of life. Instead, it is circular, always a beginning or an enriched return to a universal life-force.

--William Bland

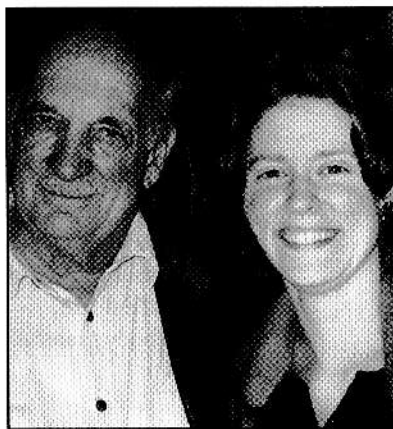
- I. The night in silence under many a star,
The ocean shore and the husky whispering
wave whose voice I know.
And the soul turning to thee O vast and
well-veil'd death,
And the body gratefully nestling close to thee.
- II. When lilacs last in the dooryard bloom'd,
I mourn'd, and yet shall mourn with
ever-returning spring.
- III. Dark mother always gliding near with soft feet,
Have none chanted for thee a chant
of fullest welcome?
Then I chant it for thee, I glorify thee above all,
I bring thee a song that when thou must
indeed come, come unfalteringly.
- IV. Approach strong deliveress,
When it is so, when thou hast taken them
I joyously sing the dead,
Lost in the loving floating ocean of thee,
Laved in the flood of thy bliss death.
- V. Come lovely and soothing death,
Undulate round the world, serenely
arriving, arriving,
In the day, in the night, to all, to each
Sooner or later delicate death.
- VI. The night in silence under many a star,
The ocean shore and the husky whispering
wave whose voice I know.
And the soul turning to thee O vast and
well-veil'd death,
And the body gratefully nestling close to thee.

THE GEORGE CRUMB ENSEMBLE



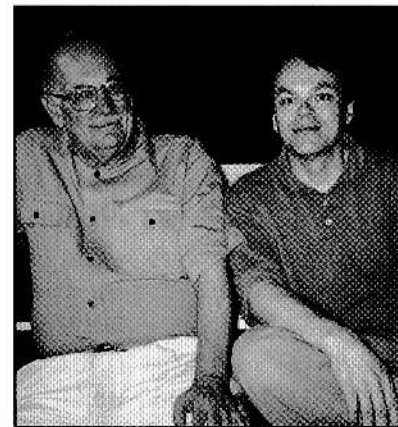
George Crumb's reputation as a composer of hauntingly beautiful scores has made him one of the most frequently performed composers in today's musical world. From Los Angeles to New York, from Madrid to Moscow, and from Scandinavia to South America, festivals devoted to the music of George Crumb have sprung up like wildflowers. Now approaching his 80th birthday year, Crumb, the winner of Grammy and Pulitzer Prizes, continues to compose new scores that are enriching the musical lives of all who come in contact with his profoundly humanistic art. George Crumb's music often juxtaposes contrasting musical styles. The references range

from music of the western art-music tradition, to hymns and folk music, to non-Western musics. Many of Crumb's works include programmatic, symbolic, mystical and theatrical elements, which are often reflected in his beautiful and meticulously notated scores. A shy, yet warmly eloquent personality, Crumb retired from his teaching position at the University of Pennsylvania after more than 30 years of service. Honored by numerous institutions with honorary Doctorates, and the recipient of dozens of awards and prizes, Crumb makes his home in Pennsylvania, in the same house where he and his wife of more than 60 years raised their three children. George Crumb's music is published by C.F. Peters and is available in an ongoing series of recordings issued on Bridge Records.



Clarity, depth, imagination, and vocal beauty mark the performances of the American soprano **Tony Arnold**. Ms. Arnold was thrust into the international spotlight when she became the first vocalist ever to be awarded First Prize in the prestigious Gaudeamus International Interpreters Competition (Holland). On the heels of that triumph, Ms. Arnold took First Prize at the 15th Annual Louise D. McMahon International Music Competition (USA). Tony Arnold's work has focused on some of the most innovative composers of our time, including György Ligeti, Thomas Ades, Luciano Berio, György Kurtág, George Crumb, Bernard Rands, Elliott Carter, and Oliver Knussen. Ms. Arnold's recordings include Elliott Carter's *Of Challenge and of Love*; George Crumb's *Madrigals* and *Ancient Voices of Children*; Luciano Berio's *Sequenza*, and Milton Babbitt's *Quatrain*s. Tony Arnold received a Grammy-nomination for her performance of *Ancient Voices of Children*. She has appeared orchestras and with leading new music ensembles across the nation, including eighth blackbird, The Furious Band, Chicago Contemporary Players, Aspen Contemporary Ensemble, Cincinnati Symphony Chamber

Players, Duo Atipica, Ad Hoc String Quartet, the Los Angeles Philharmonic's Green Umbrella series, and the Contemporary Ensembles of Oberlin College, Princeton University, Northwestern University, and the University of Chicago. Ms. Arnold is currently a Professor of Voice at the State University of New York, Buffalo. Ms. Arnold's latest recording is a DVD and CD of Hungarian composer György Kurtág's masterpiece, *Kafka Fragments*.



Robert Shannon has performed throughout the USA, Europe, South America and Asia. His repertoire ranges from Bach to Adams, and he has been especially noted for penetrating interpretations of recent American music. Mr. Shannon has performed regularly at the Grand

Teton Music Festival, the Festival Tibor Varga in Switzerland, 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, and Taiwan. Mr. Shannon has specialized in the performance of George Crumb's piano works, and his recordings of this repertoire for Bridge's "Complete Crumb Edition" have drawn high praise from the international press. 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. *Mr. Shannon's recordings include: Ives: Concord Sonata and Harbison: Sonata (BRIDGE 9036); Ives: The Sonatas for Violin and Piano (BRIDGE 9024A/B); Keyboard works by Tod Machover (BRIDGE 9040); and solo and duo piano works by George Crumb (BRIDGE 9113 and BRIDGE 9127), and both books of George Crumb's Makrokosmos (BRIDGE 9155).*

David Starobin was recently called by "Soundboard" magazine "arguably the



most influential American classical guitarist of the twentieth century." Composers including Elliott Carter, George Crumb, Lukas Foss, Poul Ruders, Gunther Schuller and Milton Babbitt have dedicated new works to him, producing a repertoire of more than 350 new scores. Starobin has performed these works throughout the world, collaborating with ensembles including The New York Philharmonic, National Symphony, Houston Symphony, San Francisco Symphony, St. Louis Symphony, Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Danish Radio Orchestra, Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, and the Emerson and Guarneri Quartets. David Starobin began his guitar studies at age 7, with the Puerto Rican guitarist Manuel Gayol, later working with Albert

Valdes Blain, and Aaron Shearer at the Peabody Conservatory of Music. Among Starobin's honors are a Harvard University Fromm Grant, Lincoln Center's Avery Fisher Career Grant; ASCAP's Deems Taylor Award, and Peabody Conservatory's "Distinguished Alumni Award". Between 1993 and 2004, Starobin was the chairman of the guitar department at the Manhattan School where he currently teaches. In 1981, David Starobin founded the record label, Bridge Records, Inc., which he served as President until 2005. Starobin's work for Bridge as performer, producer and executive producer has earned three Grammy awards and eighteen Grammy nominations.



George Crumb,
"Bad Dog!"

Director: David Starobin
Executive Producer: Becky Starobin
Film Editor: Robert Robles
Cinematographer: Brad Napoliello
Audio Recording, Mixing, and Mastering: Adam Abeshouse
Audio Editor: Charlie Post
5.1 Surround Sound Mix: Silas Brown
Audio assistant: Andy Ryder
Piano technician: Edward Court
Opening titles and Graphic Design: Douglas H. Holly
Ms. Arnold's makeup: Emily Abeshouse
Camera Operators:

Camera 1

Alexis Napoliello
Ashley Arrington, assistant
Robert Curtis (Crumb interview)

Camera 2

Robert Starobin
Becky Starobin (additional footage)
Bill Winters (Asst. Crumb interview)

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"Complete Crumb Edition"

Drawing of "Dark Mother" by P. Craig Russell, courtesy of Bridge Records, Inc.

Excerpt from *Pastoral Drone* by George Crumb,
performed by Gregory D'Agostino, organ; on Bridge 9127

"Yoda" and "Fritzi" from *Mundus Canis* by George Crumb,
performed by David Starobin, guitar, George Crumb, percussion

Excerpt from *Star-Child* by George Crumb,
performed by the Warsaw Philharmonic and Warsaw Philharmonic Chorus,
Thomas Conlin, conductor; on BRIDGE 9095

Excerpt from *Quest* by George Crumb,
performed by David Starobin, guitar, Speculum Musicae,
William Purvis, conductor; on BRIDGE 9069

Three Early Songs by George Crumb,
performed by Tony Arnold, soprano; and Robert Shannon, piano

Eine Kleine Mitternachtmusik by George Crumb,
performed by Robert Shannon, piano

Sit Down, Sister from *A Journey Beyond Time*, by George Crumb,
arranged by George Crumb & David Starobin
performed by The George Crumb Ensemble: Tony Arnold, soprano;
David Starobin, guitar; Robert Shannon, piano; George Crumb, percussion

Apparition, by George Crumb,
performed by Tony Arnold, soprano; Robert Shannon, piano

Excerpt from *Music for a Summer Evening* by George Crumb,
performed by Quattro Mani (Susan Grace and Alice Rybak, pianos)
John Kinzie, percussion and David Colson, percussion; on BRIDGE 9105

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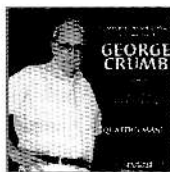
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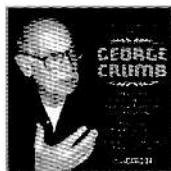
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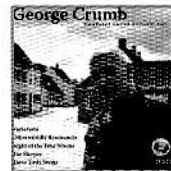
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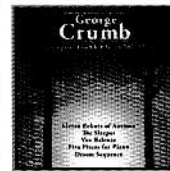
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