

**Producer:** David Crumb

*September Elegy* (Recorded December 13, 2011)

*Soundings* (Recorded December 12, 2011)

*Red Desert Triptych* (Recorded January 3, 2014)

*Primordial Fantasy* (Recorded October 27, 2013)

**Engineer:** Lance Miller (*September Elegy, Soundings, Primordial Fantasy*)

Recorded in Beall Hall, University of Oregon School of Music and Dance

**Engineer:** Tadashi Matsuura (*Red Desert Triptych*)

Recorded in Lang Concert Hall, Swarthmore College

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Jerome Simas; Terrence McCarthy

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# David Crumb RED DESERT



**1 September Elegy (13:21)**

*Fritz Gearhart, violin*  
*Corey Hamm, piano*

**2 Soundings (7:48)**

*Jerome Simas, clarinet*  
*Steve Vacchi, bassoon*  
*Corey Hamm, piano*

**3-5 Red Desert Triptych (35:24)**

**3. Rock Cathedrals Rising (11:43)**

**4. Dance of the Hoodoos (9:24)**

**5. Arches: Fantasy-Passacaglia and Fugue  
on a Theme by J.S. Bach (14:17)**

*Marcantonio Barone, piano*

**6 Primordial Fantasy (8:38)**

<i>Marcantonio Barone, solo piano</i>	<i>Sean Wagoner, percussion</i>
<i>Robert Ponto, conductor</i>	<i>Pius Cheung, percussion</i>
<i>Melissa Peña, oboe</i>	<i>Kathryn Lucktenberg, viola</i>
<i>Louis DeMartino, clarinet</i>	<i>Steven Pologe, cello</i>
<i>Lydia Van Dreel, horn</i>	<i>Tyler Abbott, bass</i>
<i>Laura Zaerr, harp</i>	

by the Utah Symphony, the Baltimore Symphony, the Cleveland Chamber Symphony, and the Oregon Mozart Players; his chamber works by the Los Angeles Philharmonic New Music Group, Orchestra 2001, the Cassatt Quartet, the Parnassus Ensemble, Voices of Change, Music at the Anthology, The Chicago Ensemble, Nextet, Musiq, Bent Frequency, Network for New Music, Percussion Plus Project, Cafè MoMus, and Quattro Mani. He has received grants from the Fromm and Barlow Foundations, and commissions from various performing organizations and presenters of new music. He has held residencies at the Yaddo and MacDowell artist colonies, and participated in numerous festivals including La Biennale di Venezia, Cincinnati Conservatory's "Music 2005," and Bowling Green State University's "21<sup>st</sup> Annual New Music & Art Festival." Crumb has served as composer-in-residence at the Oregon Bach Festival Composers Symposium, and was featured guest composer at Washington State University's "Festival of Contemporary Art Music." Crumb's music has recently become available on compact disc recordings—most notably, his *Variations for Cello and Chamber Ensemble*, performed by cellist Ulrich Boeckheler and Orchestra 2001 (C.R.I./New World); and his compositions for two pianos, *Harmonia Mundi* and *The Whisperer*, performed by Quattro Mani (Innova). Other works have been released on Equilibrium, Capstone, Albany, and Stradivarius. Crumb is the recipient of numerous honors, including a Guggenheim Fellowship, a John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Residency Award, an Aaron Copland Award, a Los Angeles Symphony "L.A. Composers Project 2" Award, and an Aaron and Abby Schroeder Fellowship/Margaret Lee Crofts Fellowship. His composition *Mood Sequence* was awarded the 2014 Heckscher Prize from Ithaca College. Crumb joined the music faculty at the University of Oregon in 1997, and continues to serve there as an Associate Professor of Composition and Theory.



**David Crumb** was born in 1962 into a musical family. His father is world-renowned composer George Crumb, and his sister, Ann Crumb, is well known as a singer/actress who has appeared on Broadway, and is actively involved in performances of contemporary music. Crumb studied cello and piano from an early age. Later, he pursued advanced training in cello at the Eastman School (from 1980-83) before

ultimately deciding to switch his focus to composition. His first important teacher, Samuel Adler, provided the initial spark that inspired him to pursue this new direction. After his time at Eastman, he enrolled in graduate studies at the University of Pennsylvania where he studied composition with Jay Reise, Richard Wernick, Stephen Jaffe, and Chinary Ung, and music theory with Leonard Meyer and Eugene Narmour. In the summer of 1987, Crumb received a fellowship from the Tanglewood Music Institute where he attended master classes held by Lukas Foss and Oliver Knussen. Shortly thereafter, he traveled to Jerusalem, Israel, to study composition and counterpoint with Russian-born composer Mark Kopytman. While at the Rubin Academy, Crumb composed what he now considers to be his first mature work: *Joyce Songs* for mezzo-soprano, flute, clarinet, and cello (1989). Upon returning to the United States, Crumb received his first major commission from the Chicago Civic Orchestra (with support from the ASCAP Foundation). The resulting work, *Clarino*, was premiered at Chicago's Symphony Hall in June 1991. *Clarino* served as Crumb's dissertation, for which he was awarded a Ph.D. in 1992. Over the years, Crumb's music has been performed throughout the United States and abroad. His orchestral works have been performed

The four works featured on this compact disc, all premiere recordings, were composed within a timespan of nearly two decades. They are quite varied in style.

I am immensely grateful for having had the opportunity to collaborate with so many brilliant and accomplished musicians, and for their superb performances on this disc. Pianist Marcantonio Barone, who performs *Red Desert Triptych* and is soloist in *Primordial Fantasy*, deserves special thanks for the enormous amount of time he devoted to this project.

—David Crumb



### ***SEPTEMBER ELEGY* for violin and piano (2001)**

In early 2001 my friend and colleague, violinist Fritz Gearhart, asked me for a piece that he could premiere at Weill Recital Hall/Carnegie Hall. After some thought, I decided to compose an elegy (a funeral “song”). This choice proved particularly prescient: I had barely sketched out the opening section when the horrific events of 9/11 transpired. I recall experiencing feelings of shock, sadness, and disbelief, and it was at this point that I chose to dedicate the piece to the victims of the terrorist attack.

The first section of *September Elegy*, that part that was composed prior to 9/11, is lyrical in style. The rather sudden dissolution of this music symbolizes the destructive, apocalyptic nature of the terrorist attack. A seemingly endless and suspended violin note emerges from this musical “void,” and is starkly scored against a softly pulsating pedal point in the piano. The middle section of the piece is harmonically and rhythmically tense and unstable. This energetic music ultimately leads to a climatic resolution, followed by a fairly literal reprise of the beginning. A return of the suspended violin note marks the onset of an extended coda. Out of a visceral sense of total desolation, delicate quotations of fragments from a J.S. Bach chorale emerge.



Professor of bassoon at the University of Oregon School of Music and Dance since 2000, **Steve Vacchi** enjoys performing a wide variety of repertoire from early music on historical instruments to the newest experimental improvisation. A member of the Oregon Wind Quintet, Oregon Ballet Theatre, and the Eugene Symphony Orchestra, he has performed with many other orchestras, including the Rochester Philharmonic, Florida Orchestra, and the Saint Louis, Colorado, Kansas City, New World, Honolulu, and Oregon Symphony Orchestras. His ongoing summer festivals include the Oregon Bach Festival, Music on the Hill (RI), and the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music (CA). He also is a member of the chamber jazz quintet *Douglas Detrick's AnyWhen Ensemble*, which has recently released three CDs and performed in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Chicago, Madison, Portland, Seattle, New York, and Washington DC.



**Jerome Simas** joined the San Francisco Symphony during the 2012-13 season. He has performed as a guest with other American orchestras, including the Cleveland Orchestra, San Francisco Opera (acting principal clarinet), and Naples (FL) Philharmonic. He was a fellow at the New World Symphony under the direction of Michael Tilson Thomas - with whom he recorded Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* and Stravinsky's *Ebony Concerto* for BMG Classics and RCA - and has held principal clarinet positions with the IRIS Orchestra, California Symphony, Oakland East Bay Symphony, Modesto Symphony, Monterey Symphony, and Akron Symphony. As a

chamber musician, he studied and performed at Marlboro Music in Vermont and is currently a member of the San Francisco-based Left Coast Chamber Ensemble. He won first prize at the International Clarinet Society's Young Artist Competition, grand prize at the Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition, and first prize at the Yellow Springs National Chamber Music Competition. He has appeared as soloist with many orchestras and as a music educator has led master classes in the US and abroad. He has taught clarinet at UC Davis, Stanford, San Francisco Conservatory of Music, and the University of Oregon School of Music and Dance.

### ***SOUNDINGS* for clarinet, bassoon, and piano (1994)**

The initial challenge in composing *Soundings* was in deciding how to “give voice” to this rather eclectic mix of instruments. I have often felt that a significant amount of woodwind chamber music is not very well conceived for the instruments. I have noticed a tendency to simply assign parts contrapuntally, and in an obvious, functional manner. So I determined to consider how the instruments themselves might inspire my compositional thinking.

The ascending scale in the clarinet that opens *Soundings* illustrates this approach. No other instrument can execute this gesture so quietly and seamlessly. Furthermore, the opening “tune” in the bassoon stands out because of the particularly poignant, saxophone-like quality of its upper register. A blending of the bassoon melody with incisive, muted tones in the piano completes the unique sound-world of this opening section.

*Soundings* was commissioned by the NEOS trio and first performed at the Foro Internacional de Musica Nueva 1994 in Mexico City. Composed shortly after I completed graduate studies at the University of Pennsylvania, the work exudes a raw energy and level of excitement that might be expected from a (relatively) young composer.

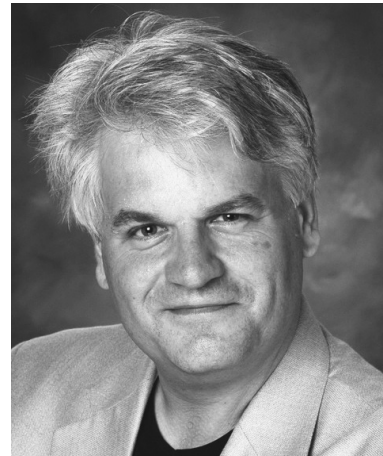
## **RED DESERT TRIPTYCH for piano (2006-2011)**

*Red Desert Triptych* is arguably my most ambitious work to date. Nearly forty minutes in duration, it is a veritable “symphony” for solo piano. The work’s textural palette ranges from intimately scored passages to fully “orchestral” effects. Each of the three movements is self-contained and revealing of its own unique sound universe. Like Messiaen’s *Des canyons aux étoiles...*, my *Red Desert Triptych* was originally inspired by visits to the national parks of southern Utah. My own allusions to these desert landscapes are impressionistic. They are not intended to be depictive or programmatic in any way.

The first movement, *Rock Cathedrals Rising*, is one of my most organic compositions. Each successive musical event that appears is a natural outgrowth of what came before. Yet the overall harmonic context, that of a vast polytonal landscape, is only gradually revealed. I believe that this idea of gradual revelation is intensely dramatic in effect. It is a concept that I have utilized in several of my other compositions (for example, in *September Elegy*).

*Dance of the Hoodoos*, the middle movement, is infused with a driving, pulse-oriented energy that provides contrast to the meditative, suspended-time quality of the first movement. Trill figures, syncopations, and complex subdivisions serve to intensify the virtuosic textures.

The final movement, *Arches: Fantasy-Passacaglia and Fugue on a Theme by J.S. Bach*, is based on the famous f-minor fugue subject from the *Well-Tempered*



**Robert Ponto** served as Director of Bands at the University of Oregon for twenty years. He has conducted ensembles throughout the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom. His performing ensembles have been featured at the *Bang on a Can* festival in New York, on National Public Radio and Oregon Public Radio, and at state, regional, and national music conferences. A self-described “musical omnivore,” Ponto is an advocate for original music in all genres and is actively engaged in the creation and performance of new works. He has collaborated with many influential composers including Da-

vid Crumb, John Adams, Steven Stucky, Michael Daugherty, Giya Kancheli, Frank Ticheli, Scott Lindroth, Augusta Read Thomas, and many others. He conducted the world premiere of Justine F. Chen’s *Philomel* with soprano Lucy Shelton. As an electronic music and sound design hobbyist, Ponto has contributed to unique projects in that genre as well. The contemporary music ensemble, *Beta Collide*, has presented his *Postmark Sirius: In Memoriam Karlheinz Stockhausen* for trumpet and live electronics; *Beta Bacher*, for the Oregon Bach Festival’s *Bach Remix V*; and a digital realization of Stockhausen’s *Solo*. His sound design work was also used by British pop singer/songwriter Imogen Heap on the song “Lifeline” from her recent album *Sparks*.

and has performed numerous works including Corigliano's *Red Violin Chaconne*. Gearhart received his Master's Degree and Performer's Certificate from the Eastman School of Music where he studied with Donald Weilerstein. Earlier studies at the Hart School included work with Charles Treger and members of the Emerson Quartet. Mr. Gearhart is currently on the faculty of the University of Oregon School of Music and Dance.



**Corey Hamm** has commissioned, premiered, and recorded over two hundred works from composers all over the world. His CD of Frederic Rzewski's hour-long solo piano epic *The People United Will Never Be Defeated!* won "Best Classical Recording" at the Western Canadian Music Awards, and high praise from Rzewski himself. Corey is pianist for The Nu:BC Collective whose CD,

*Beyond Shadows*, has also met with critical acclaim. He has commissioned over forty new works with erhu virtuoso Nicole Ge Li for PEP (Piano and Erhu Project). He has recorded for Redshift, Arktos, and CBC. Corey is Associate Professor of Piano at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, and is on the piano faculty of the Summer Institute for Contemporary Performance Practice at New England Conservatory in Boston. His beloved teachers include Lydia Artymiw, Marek Jablonski, Stéphane Lemelin, Ernesto Lejano, and Thelma O'Neill.

*Clavier*, Book I. This particular subject is interesting in that it uses ten out of twelve notes of the chromatic scale. The initial passacaglia section comprises several variations, many of which explore close canonic settings. The fugal section comprises two fully developed fugues that are elided. The movement concludes with a quiet recitation of the *Dies Irae* hymn. In performance notes, I allow that each of these movements can be performed independently.

***PRIMORDIAL FANTASY***  
**for solo piano and chamber ensemble (2002)**

In 2001, I was awarded a co-commissioning grant from the Fromm Foundation at Harvard. With grant in hand, I approached James Freeman, music director of Orchestra 2001, with an offer to compose some type of concerto for his ensemble. As it turned out, *Primordial Fantasy* ended up not as a concerto movement, but rather an ensemble piece that features solo piano. "Primordial" refers to the violent atmospheric conditions and primordial "soup" thought to exist at earth's beginning.

*Primordial Fantasy* was premiered by Marcantonio Barone and Orchestra 2001 at the Trinity Center in Philadelphia in 2002.





**Marcantonio Barone** was born in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, in 1962. He studied with Eleanor Sokoloff at the Curtis Institute of Music and with Leon Fleisher at the Peabody Conservatory of Music. Among his other teachers were Taylor Redden, Susan Starr, and Leonard Shure. As a solo recitalist, Mr. Barone has performed for the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, and at the Metropolitan Museum in New York, the Wigmore Hall in London, and the Large Hall of the St. Petersburg Filarmoniya, among many other venues. In the 1980s and '90s, he frequently performed as soloist with major orchestras including the Philadelphia Orchestra, the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, and the Moscow Symphony Orchestra. He has given the world premieres of concerted works by David Crumb, Gerald Levinson, and Andrew Rudin; and works for piano solo by Richard Brodhead, David Finko, Ulysses Kay, Philip Maneval, George Rochberg, and Melinda Wagner. As a member of Orchestra 2001 under the direction of James Freeman, he was the pianist for the first performances, as well as the subsequent recordings for Bridge Records' Complete Crumb Edition, of the seven volumes of George Crumb's monumental *American Songbook*. He has performed with the musicians of Orchestra 2001 in Russia, Denmark, Great Britain, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates, introducing recent American works to international audiences.

He and violinist Barbara Govatos received the Classical Recording Foundation's 2012 Samuel Sanders Collaborative Artist Award for their Bridge recording of the complete sonatas for violin and piano of Beethoven. Mr. Barone is head of the piano department and assistant director at the Bryn Mawr Conservatory of Music, and he teaches keyboard musicianship, piano, and chamber music at Swarthmore College. He is a Steinway Artist.

Violinist **Fritz Gearhart** has performed for audiences from coast to coast. He has appeared in major halls around the country including the Kennedy Center, the 92<sup>nd</sup> Street Y in NYC, Alice Tully Hall, and Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie (six times since 1998). He is heard frequently on National Public Radio programs, including past live broadcasts on WFMT in Chicago, and WQXR in New York, as well as Public Radio's nationally syndicated program *Performance Today*. Several compact discs featuring Gearhart have been released to rave reviews. Gearhart has performed with the Chester String Quartet and the Oregon String Quartet, which released two discs on Koch Entertainment: *The OSQ* and *All That Jazz*, featuring jazz violinist Diane Monroe, and a disc containing music by African-American composer William Grant Still which *Strad Magazine* called "Musical Heaven: Oregon String Quartet." Gearhart also occasionally appears as soloist with orchestras,



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