

# CMS Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center

TUESDAY EVENING, MAY 7, 2024, AT 7:30 ▶ 4,436TH CONCERT

**Alice Tully Hall, Starr Theater, Adrienne Arsht Stage**  
*Home of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center*

**DAWN UPSHAW**, soprano  
**GILBERT KALISH**, piano  
**ALISA WEILERSTEIN**, cello  
**SANDBOX PERCUSSION**  
**JONATHAN ALLEN**  
**VICTOR CACCESE**  
**IAN DAVID ROSENBAUM**  
**TERRY SWEENEY**

## Songs and Snow

**GEORGE CRUMB**  
(1929–2022)

*The Winds of Destiny:*

*Songs of Strife, Love, Mystery and Exultation:  
A Cycle of American Civil War Songs, Folk Songs  
and Spirituals [American Songbook IV] for Voice,  
Percussion Quartet, and Amplified Piano* (2004)

- ▶ I. Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory
- ▶ II. When Johnny Comes Marching Home
- ▶ III. Lonesome Road
- ▶ IV. Twelve Gates to the City
- ▶ V. De Profundis: A Psalm for the Night-Wanderer  
(Instrumental Interlude)
- ▶ VI. All My Trials (Death's Lullaby)
- ▶ VII. Go Tell It on the Mountain!
- ▶ VIII. The Enchanted Valley
- ▶ IX. Shenandoah

UPSHAW, ALLEN, CACCESE, ROSENBAUM, SWEENEY, KALISH

## INTERMISSION

**TAN DUN**  
(b. 1957)

*Elegy: Snow in June for Cello and Percussion  
Quartet* (1991)

WEILERSTEIN, ALLEN, CACCESE, ROSENBAUM, SWEENEY

Lighting for this program was designed by **Alejandro Fajardo**.

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The Chamber Music Society acknowledges with sincere appreciation **Ms. Tali Mahanor's** generous long-term loan of the Hamburg Steinway & Sons model "D" concert grand piano.

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**Photographing, sound recording, or videotaping this performance is prohibited.**

# ABOUT TONIGHT'S PROGRAM

Dear Listener,

If you happen to experience déjà vu during this concert, it may be that you were with us on April 29, 2011. On that Friday evening, here in Alice Tully Hall, we paired George Crumb and Tan Dun in a program virtually identical to today's, with a few exceptions: first, our earlier program's Crumb consisted of various selections from his many *Songbook* collections, while this concert presents Book IV as a coherent whole. Second, our cast of musicians today is entirely different, save for one: pianist Gilbert Kalish, the definitive Crumb interpreter of our time. And lastly, for the Crumb, we move from baritone in 2011 to soprano, with Dawn Upshaw laying claim also to the reputation of greatest Crumb vocalist of today. Another interesting fact to call out is the appearance tonight of a truly miraculous ensemble, Sandbox Percussion, which makes its CMS debut on the heels of receiving the 2024 Avery Fisher Career Grant; they are the first percussion ensemble ever to win the prestigious prize.

Tonight is, in some ways, a study in contrasts. George Crumb, who passed away in February 2022 at the age of 92, was a quiet figure who lived largely in his own musical world, rarely venturing away from his long-time home in Media, Pennsylvania. Tan Dun, however, enjoys a truly global presence today as a composer of operas, symphonic and chamber works, theater and film scores, and works for solo instruments. However, the two share the stage equally when it comes to musical evolution, Crumb having "saved" (as the press put it) contemporary music itself with his immediately gripping and engaging works during the 1960s, and Tan Dun exploring and exploiting—with enormous success—multiple opportunities to bridge and blend Eastern and Western musical traditions.

It gives us the greatest pleasure to be able to offer such a program as part of a Chamber Music Society season. It is our privilege not only to be able to assemble such an incomparable cast of musicians, but also to give them the supreme acoustical environment of Alice Tully Hall to make the magic happen. Last but not least is our gratitude to you, our listeners, for opening your arms to embrace works like these as true chamber music.

Enjoy the performance,



David Finckel

ARTISTIC DIRECTORS



Wu Han



## NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

By Kathryn Bacasmot

### ***The Winds of Destiny [American Songbook IV] for Voice, Percussion Quartet, and Amplified Piano***

#### **GEORGE CRUMB**

- ▶ Born October 24, 1929, in Charleston, West Virginia
- ▶ Died February 6, 2022, in Media, Pennsylvania

- ▶ This is the first CMS performance of the complete piece.
- ▶ Duration: 45 minutes

#### ***Composed in 2004***

Throughout George Crumb's long career, one project dominated a nearly ten-year period, his seven-volume song cycle called *American Songbook*. The impetus came from Crumb's daughter, Ann, an actress and singer, who asked for new arrangements of American folk songs. Crumb preserved their melodies faithfully, but reimagined their framework. By doing so, he hoped

to augment and sharpen the songs' emotional and expressive impact. The accompanying ensemble consists of a pianist and four percussionists whose battery includes instruments from many cultures, contrasting the local with the global. Crumb explained: "By means of a wide range of timbres and textures together with the use of an extended chromaticism and occasionally unusual

rhythmic patterns, I have attempted to bring out the psychological depth and mysticism and also the humor (both whimsical and ironic) inherent in Appalachian folklore." For the first four volumes of the cycle, Crumb adhered to a structure of four songs, then an instrumental interlude, followed by four more songs.

Theatricality plays a dominant role in many of Crumb's settings, including "Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory," also known as "Battle Hymn of the Republic," written during the American Civil War with lyrics by the abolitionist writer Julia Ward Howe and set to the tune of "John Brown's Body." At the head of the score, Crumb describes the scene as "a deserted battlefield under moonlight." By stripping the music entirely of its original militaristic march rhythm, he replaces triumph with reflection. The lonely hoot of an owl that bookends the work is jarring and disorienting, confronting us with the reality of bloodsoaked fields and emptier homes.

This is followed by another Civil War song, "When Johnny Comes Marching Home." Crumb turns the work on its head by starting the song with a series of ferocious strikes evoking warfare. When the vocalist enters, we hear a frantic, yearning cry instead of an assured hope. Later in the work, the tone darkens further, and Crumb interpolates a funeral march melody from Gustav Mahler's First Symphony. "Lonesome Road" appeared in the poet Carl Sandburg's own collection of folk songs, *American Songbag*. Here, the atmospheric accompaniment evokes a sense of distant memory, looking back through the fog of time. In jubilant contrast is "Twelve Gates to the City," an African American spiritual that is sometimes known as "Oh, What a Beautiful City." Here, we are greeted

with the bright sounds of chimes, bells, and piano chords—akin to some of Olivier Messiaen's musical depictions of heavenly light and love—anchored by the resonance of vibraphone.

The instrumental interlude that marks the halfway point, *De Profundis: A Psalm for the Night-Wanderer*, alludes to Psalm 130, which begins with the words, "Out of the depths." A song of despair and hope, Crumb augments the meaning for the performers through creative score writing: the background is black and the notes are white, so that they appear to emerge from the deep. This interlude melds seamlessly into "All My Trials (Death's Lullaby)." This stark, almost ghostly, setting opens with a Nigerian instrument called the Udu, a clay pot with one hole in its side, traditionally used as a water jug and for ceremonial purposes. Its name means "vessel" in Igbo, making it a fitting instrument to accompany a text about earthly bodies returning to dust.

"Go Tell It on the Mountain!," an African American spiritual, brings back the shimmering bells and chimes heard in the fourth song. A distinctive feature of this setting is its emphasis on rhythm and syncopation. It ends with the effect of echoing across the hills. "The Enchanted Valley" is the sole completely original work in *The Winds of Destiny*, written by Crumb along with his daughter, Ann, who wrote its lyrics.

Concluding the set is "Shenandoah." Here, Crumb instructs the performers that the mood is "Serenely majestic, like a larger rhythm of nature (luminous, incandescent; like van Gogh's *Starry Night*)." The folk song is traditionally interpreted as a love song about a trader's yearning for the Oneida Chief Shenandoah's daughter, but it is also the name of a river that flows through Crumb's home state, West Virginia.

The river flows into the Potomac at Harper's Ferry; it was there that a raid against slavery took place, led by John

Brown, the abolitionist alluded to at the beginning of *The Winds of Destiny*, thereby bringing the work full circle. ♦

## ***Elegy: Snow in June* for Cello and Percussion Quartet (1991)**

### **TAN DUN**

► Born August 18, 1957, in Simao, Hunan Province, China

#### ***Composed in 1991***

A native of China's Hunan Province, Tan Dun studied at the Beijing Central Conservatory of Music in the aftermath of the Cultural Revolution. There, as the country opened to the West and finally allowed students to explore the developments in 20th-century music, he had the opportunity to hear from composers like George Crumb, who were invited to lecture about their techniques and approaches. As he matured as a musician, Tan Dun became a member of what was known as the Chinese New Wave, a group of composers who were melding elements from Chinese traditional and folk music with the European classical tradition. The results are works of stunning originality for a broad array of ensembles, sizes, and genres, including film. He won an Academy Award, a Grammy, and a BAFTA Award for his score to the movie *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*.

Tan Dun moved to the United States in 1986 to study at Columbia University and composed *Elegy: Snow in June* while completing his doctoral work. The music sits at a unique intersection of European modernism and ancient Chinese culture and theater. It is derived from a Chinese classical play called *The Injustice to Dou E*, written in the 13th century by Guan Han-Ching.

- First CMS performance on April 29, 2011, by cellist Andres Diaz and percussionists Ayano Kataoka, David Cossin, Hakura Fujii, and Jeffrey Milarsky
- Duration: 23 minutes

In the story, Dou E is a child bride who becomes widowed soon after her wedding day. A suitor, whom Dou E rejects, decides to take his revenge by accusing Dou E of murdering his father, when he is the true perpetrator of the crime. This ultimately leads to Dou E's execution. Pleading her case, Dou E proclaims that if she is innocent, three mystical occurrences will come to pass after her death, proving that she was wrongly accused. First, the droplets of her blood would not fall to the ground, but rather flow upward toward the sky. Second, snow would fall in June to cover her resting place in a shroud of white. Third, the region would be punished by a drought lasting three years. The first two events come to fruition at the moment of her execution, the final in the years after. Dou E is finally absolved three years later, when her father is elected to the local government and has the power to launch an investigation.

In Tan Dun's musical reimagining, the play is a concerto for solo cello and percussion quartet. It draws from the third act of the drama, the execution, when Dou E makes her three wishes. The voice of Dou E is channeled through the cello, lamenting and entreating, while the percussion quartet represents her executioner, as well as the environment

of the scene. Throughout, you can hear details of the action brought to life with such effects as the tearing of paper to evoke the sounds of a government office. A moment of profound pathos occurs during an extended solo for the cello as the percussionists fall silent. In this moment, Dou E catches a glimpse of her beloved mother-in-law. Her somber inner monologue seeks a place in her memories: "Think of Dou E, who served you all these years. . . . It is I, Dou E, who has no luck, and who has to suffer in confusion such great injustice."

Tan Dun's idea for the work was inspired by his reaction to the Tiananmen Square uprising and the deaths of the protesters. Dou E's fate, therefore, represents injustice writ large. In his own remarks, the composer writes that the piece "sings of pity and purity, beauty and darkness, and is a lament for victims everywhere." ♦

*Kathryn Bacasmot writes about music and is a regular program annotator for CMS.*

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# ABOUT THE ARTISTS



LILIAN FINCKEL

## GILBERT KALISH

► The profound influence of Gilbert Kalish as an educator and pianist in myriad performances and recordings has established him as a major figure in American music. In 2002 he received the Richard J. Bogomolny National Service Award for his contributions to chamber music, and in 2006 he was awarded the Peabody Medal by the Peabody Conservatory. He was the pianist of the Boston Symphony Chamber Players for 30 years and was a founding member of the Contemporary

Chamber Ensemble, a group that flourished during the 1960s and 70s in support of new music. He is particularly well-known for his partnership of many years with mezzo-soprano Jan DeGaetani, as well as for current collaborations with soprano Dawn Upshaw and cellists Timothy Eddy and Joel Krosnick. A distinguished professor at Stony Brook University, Kalish has performed with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center since 2004.



BROOKE RISH

## DAWN UPSHAW

► Five-time Grammy winner Dawn Upshaw has achieved worldwide celebrity as a singer of opera and concert repertoire. She began her career as a 1984 winner of the Young Concert Artists Auditions and the 1985 Walter W. Naumburg Competition, and was a member of the Metropolitan Opera Young Artists Development Program. In 2007, she was named a Fellow of the MacArthur Foundation, the first vocal artist to be awarded the five-year “genius”

prize, and in 2008 she was named a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Her acclaimed performances on the opera stage comprise the great Mozart roles as well as works by Stravinsky, Poulenc, and Messiaen. From Salzburg, Paris, and Glyndebourne to the Metropolitan Opera, she has also championed numerous works created for her by composers including John Harbison, Kaija Saariaho, John Adams, and Osvaldo Golijov. She is the Head of the Vocal Arts Program at the Tanglewood Music Center and was the founding Artistic Director of the Vocal Arts Program at the Bard College Conservatory of Music.



## ALISA WEILERSTEIN

▶ Alisa Weilerstein is one of the foremost cellists of our time. Since making her professional and Carnegie Hall debuts in her early teens, she has been in high demand as a solo recitalist, chamber musician, and concerto soloist with leading orchestras worldwide. She was recognized with a MacArthur Fellowship in 2011, and her discography includes chart-topping albums and a winner of BBC Music’s Recording of the Year award. In the 2023–24 season, she plays repertoire

spanning three centuries, from Haydn’s C-major Concerto with the Boston Symphony Orchestra to Anna Clyne’s *DANCE* with the Helsinki Philharmonic. She is an ardent advocate of contemporary music, and has premiered and championed important new works by composers including Pascal Dusapin, Osvaldo Golijov, and Matthias Pintscher. Other career milestones include a performance at the White House for President and Mrs. Obama. Diagnosed with type 1 diabetes at nine years old, Weilerstein is a staunch advocate for the T1D community. She is married to Venezuelan conductor Rafael Payare, with whom she has two young children.



## SANDBOX PERCUSSION

▶ Described as “exhilarating” (*The New York Times*) and “utterly mesmerizing” (*The Guardian*), Grammy-nominated ensemble Sandbox Percussion is dedicated to artistry in contemporary chamber music. The ensemble was brought together in 2011 by a love of chamber music and the simple joy of playing together; today, Sandbox Percussion captivates worldwide audiences with visually and aurally stunning performances.

Sandbox Percussion’s 2021 album *Seven Pillars* was nominated for two Grammy awards: Best Chamber Music/Small Ensemble Performance and Best Contemporary Classical Composition. The ensemble performed the piece more than 15 times throughout the United States and Europe last season, including at the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris.

In the 2023–24 season, Sandbox Percussion performs *Seven Pillars* at the VIVO Music Festival; the New School; Aperio, Music of the Americas; the Frost School of Music; Brown University; and the Peace Center Concert Hall, among other venues.

This season, Sandbox Percussion also releases their fourth album, *Wilderness*, featuring the piece of the same name by experimental composer Jerome Begin. Other season highlights include two performances at the Park Avenue Armory, featuring premieres by Chris Cerrone and Viet Cuong; a performance at the 92nd Street Y with pianist and new-music champion Conor Hanick featuring the New York premiere of two works composed for them by Christopher Cerrone and by Tyshawn Sorey; and an appearance at the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. Sandbox Percussion will also continue to champion Viet Cuong's acclaimed concerto for percussion quartet, *Re(new)al*, including performances with the Des Moines Symphony and with the Albany Symphony, which commissioned the piece.

Besides maintaining an international performance schedule, Sandbox Percussion holds the position of ensemble-in-residence and percussion faculty at the University of Missouri-Kansas City and the New School's College of Performing Arts. In 2016, Sandbox Percussion founded the Sandbox Percussion Seminar, introducing percussion students to the leading percussion chamber music of the day. The group recently became the first percussion ensemble to be awarded the Avery Fisher Career Grant.

## ABOUT THE CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY

**The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center** (CMS) was founded in 1969 under the leadership and patronage of Alice Tully and the artistic direction of Charles Wadsworth, beginning a new era for chamber music in the United States. Through its many performance, education, and digital activities, CMS brings the experience of great chamber music to more people than any other organization of its kind. The performing artists constitute a multi-generational and international roster of the world's finest chamber musicians, enabling CMS to present chamber music of every instrumentation, style, and historical period. The Bowers Program, our competitive three-season residency, is dedicated to developing the chamber music leaders of the future and integrates this selection of extraordinary early-career musicians into every facet of CMS activities. CMS reaches a growing global audience through a range of free digital media, including livestreams, an online archive of more than 1,500 video recordings, and broadcasts that are distributed to millions of listeners around the world.

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Updated on April 8, 2024

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Elinor and Andrew Hoover  
Mr. and Mrs. Philip Howard  
Helen Huntington Hull Fund  
Estate of Katherine M. Hurd  
Alice Ilchman Fund  
Warren Ilchman  
Harry P. Kamen  
Priscilla F. Kauff  
Jane and Peter Keegan  
Estate of Peter L. Kennard  
Estate of Jane W. Kitselman  
Estate of Andrea J. Klepetar-Fallick  
Helen Brown Levine  
Estate of Charles Hamilton Newman  
Estate of Emiko Okawa  
Mr. and Mrs. James P. O'Shaughnessy  
Mr. and Mrs. Howard Phipps, Jr.  
Donaldson C. Pillsbury Fund  
Eva Popper, in memory of  
Gideon Strauss  
Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd  
Daniel and Joanna S. Rose  
Estate of Anita Salisbury

Fan Fox & Leslie R. Samuels  
Foundation  
The Herbert J. Seligmann Charitable  
Trust  
Herbert and Judith Schlosser  
David Simon  
Arlene Stern Trust  
Estate of Arlette B. Stern  
Estate of Ruth C. Stern  
Elise L. Stoeger Prize for  
Contemporary Music, bequest of  
Milan Stoeger  
Estate of Frank E. Taplin, Jr.  
Joost and Maureen Thesseling  
Mrs. Frederick L. Townley  
Miss Alice Tully  
Suzanne E. Vaucher and  
William R. Stensrud  
Lila Acheson Wallace  
Lelia and Edward Wardwell  
Elaine and Alan Weiler  
Elizabeth Weinberg Smith, Sidney J.  
Weinberg, Jr. Foundation  
The Helen F. Whitaker Fund  
Mr. and Mrs. Jarvis Wilcox  
Kathe and Edwin Williamson  
Shannon Wu and Joseph Kahn  
Estate of Richard S. Zeisler  
Henry S. Ziegler  
Anonymous (2)

## ALICE TULLY CIRCLE

The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center is deeply grateful to the visionary members of the Alice Tully Circle. We thank all of you who have made CMS part of your estate plan. For more information about leaving an important legacy on our cultural community, please call (212) 875-5782.

### Alice Tully Circle

Aimee B. Anderson  
Leon and Joan Ashner  
Brett Bachman and Elisabeth Challener  
Mrs. Marguerite S. Bedell  
Eliane Bukantz  
Michael and Esther Bushell  
Joanne Castellani and Michael  
Andriaccio  
Theodore Cohn  
Robert J. Cubitto and Ellen R. Nadler  
Stephen Delroy Charitable Fund  
Jon Dickinson and Marlene Burns  
Howard Dillon and Nell Dillon-Ermers  
Carlotta Eisen  
Mitzi Filson  
Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Giron

Marion F. Goldin Charitable Fund  
Ms. Dalia Carmel Goldstein  
Mrs. Phyllis Grann  
Paul B. Gridley  
Mrs. Mary Scott Guest  
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Frederick L. Jacobson  
Thomas Jambois  
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Hans and Donna Kilian  
Dr. Thomas C. King  
Chloë A. Kramer  
Harriet and William Lembeck  
Helen Brown Levine  
Seth Novatt and Priscilla Natkins  
Debra Pincus  
Eva Popper

Martin Riskin  
Mrs. Robert Schuur  
Susan Stempleski  
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Kenny Tan  
Leo Tick  
Suzanne E. Vaucher and  
William R. Stensrud  
Sally Wardwell  
Alan G. Weiler  
Janet and Peter White  
John S. Wilson  
Roger and Jill Witten  
  
Anonymous (1)