Nostalgia and Memory in the Music of George Crumb

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George Crumb (b. 1929) emerged in the 1960s as an influential figure in American music and culture. His orchestral composition “Echoes of Time and the River” won the 1968 Pulitzer Prize, and “Black Angels” for Electric String Quartet (1970) remains as a powerfully expressive response to the war in Vietnam. As innovative as Crumb is in exploring timbre, extended performance techniques, and notation, his music is rooted in the music of the past. In his lecture, Steven Bruns traces this nostalgic impulse throughout Crumb’s oeuvre and suggests a critical approach not only to his music, but also to other artists whose work relies on explicit and implicit memories.

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