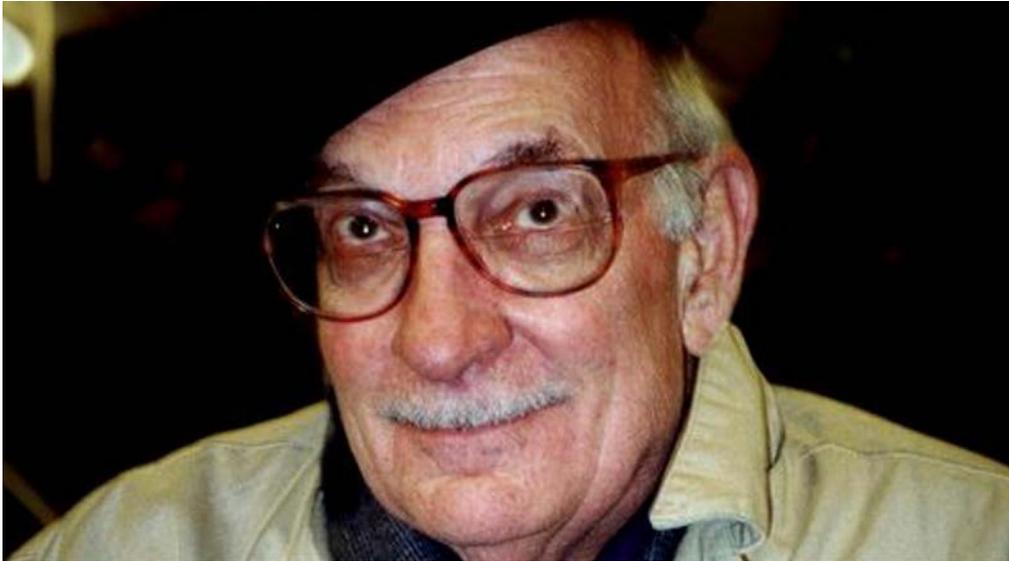


**This interview with
GEORGE CRUMB
was conducted by the Library of Congress
on May 11, 2020**



Library of Congress: I always like to ask composers what I call a “pure craft” question. That is: is there a time or place that you do most of your work?

George Crumb: I like to do my composing early in the morning. Since I usually get up at around four AM, I can start work at six or seven. Other labors (such as manuscript work) I usually do at other times of the day.

LC: How long did it take you—from beginning to end—to compose “Black Angels”? Was this amount of time typical for you and a work of this length?

GC: I can’t recall exactly how long it took me to complete the pencil score for “Black Angels” --I believe it took me about six months (I’m a very slow composer!). Usually I begin making an ink score whenever I finish a movement or two.

LC: What lessons about electronics and/or music did you take back with your from having studied in Berlin in the 1950s?

GC: When I received a Fulbright to study in Germany, I had just about completed my Doctorial studies at the University of Michigan. I really wasn’t interested in further study with a teacher

(although I had two or three sessions with Boris Blocher). I spent much time going to the Russian sector in order to attend opera performances and I did also compose my Sonata for Cello during that year.

LC: “Black Angels” addressed the Vietnam War. After its premiere, did you encounter controversy—from any perspective—regarding the statement it was making?

GC: When I was commissioned to compose a string quartet for the faculty quartet at the University of Michigan I had no idea that “Black Angels” would be influenced by the Vietnam War. But certain titles in the score, together with the character of the music itself, so obviously reflected the anguish and darkness of those times. I found that most audiences immediately sensed those deeper influences reflected in the work.