



THE CROSSING @ CHRISTMAS

David Lang's *poor hymnal*

The Jeffery Dinsmore Memorial Concerts

CONDUCTOR Donald Nally

THE CROSSING

Isobel Anthony, Nathaniel Barnett, Kelly Ann Bixby, Karen Blanchard, Steven Bradshaw, Colin Dill, Micah Dinger, Ryan Fleming, Joanna Gates, Michael Hawes, Steven Hyder, Lauren Kelly, Anika Kildegaard, Chelsea Lyons, Maren Montalbano, Daniel O'Dea, Olivia Prendergast, Daniel Schwartz, Thann Scoggin, Rebecca Siler, Tiana Sorenson, Daniel Spratlan, Elisa Sutherland, Daniel Taylor

ASSISTANT CONDUCTOR Kevin Vondrak

COMPANY KEYBOARDIST John Grecia

OPERATIONS MANAGER Shannon McMahan

SOUND DESIGNER Paul Vazquez

BOOKKEEPER Elizabeth Dugan

REPRESENTATION Alliance Artist Management

The premiere performances of *poor hymnal* are made possible through a generous gift from The Crossing's longtime friend and supporter Carol Westfall.

Friday, December 15 @ 6 PM

Friday, December 15 @ 8:30 PM

Iron Gate Theatre

There will be no intermission.

PROGRAM

poor hymnal by David Lang (World Premiere)

1. I saw a poor man
2. open your hands (*after Deuteronomy 15*)
3. our hearts tell us (*after Psalm 27 and Mahatma Gandhi*)
4. all who are hungry (*after the Passover Haggadah*)
5. the least of us (*after Leviticus 19 and Matthew 25*)
6. I know I should (*after H. A. Walter*)
7. if you close your ear (*after Proverbs 21:13*)
8. prayer for kindness
9. what is mine (*after Elizabeth Warren, Barack Obama, and Saint Basil*)
10. take nothing with you (*after Luke 9:3*)
11. what remains (*after sayings of the fathers and Matthew 6*)
12. things that never fail (*after 1 Corinthians 13*)
13. I saw a poor man – choral return
14. wherever charity is (*after Tolstoy, after Ubi caritas*)

poor hymnal was co-commissioned for The Crossing and Donald Nally by Elizabeth and Justus Schlichting, Jill and Loren Bough and Peggy and Mark Curchack.

poor hymnal is dedicated, in love and friendship, to Donald Nally and The Crossing.

NOTE FROM THE COMPOSER

I have a small collection of old hymnals that I have picked up over the years - used and thumbed over and smudged by the generations of people who had turned their pages. What I love about hymnals is that they are a catalog of things a community of worshippers can agree on, a catalog that can be sung. And what the worshippers are singing about matters. The texts represent the beliefs and values that the worshippers all share, so hymnals have the power to highlight the hymns that make a particular community feel and act differently from all the others.

Many religions - mine included - profess that an important part of their belief is to care about how people who are comfortable should act towards people who are not. How we were strangers in a strange land, the least among us, the camel going through the eye of the needle, etc. Of course, it is hard for us to remind ourselves to keep caring, and it would be so much easier to forget. With this in mind, I wondered if the hymns of a community that did not want to forget our responsibilities to each other and that wanted to make our responsibilities to each other the central tenet of our coming together, might be different from the hymns that we are singing now. I wrote *poor hymnal* to find out.

I should add that I first became interested in the idea of a hymnal from my college enthusiasm for the music of Charles Ives. Ives's music is full of references to the hymns of old New England that were so important to his upbringing; his pieces are full of distorted and fragmentary references to the music of his youth. This, of course, was not the music of my youth. I bought my first hymnal because I needed to learn more about Ives's world if I was going to be able to go deeper into his music, and so if there is anything in *poor hymnal* that reminds the listener of a New England church experience, that is most likely where it comes from.

PROGRAM TEXTS

1. I saw a poor man

I saw a man
I saw a poor man
I saw a poor man
fall

I saw a man
I saw a poor man
in a corner
with no food

I saw a man
I saw a poor man
a poor young man
feeling sad, praying
bending over his plough
hanging on to his plough

I saw a poor man
I saw a poor man
he was begging
he was trudging, barefoot
he was asking for food
he was asking me for food

he was walking by himself
on the street, barefoot
an obscure man
weeping
staring at me

I saw a man
I saw a poor man
I saw a poor man
fall

2. open your hands (after Deuteronomy 15)

if among you
there is a poor man
one of your brothers

don't harden your heart
don't close your hand
open your heart
open your hand to him
open your hand

if among you
there is a poor woman
one of your sisters

don't harden your heart
don't close your hand
open your heart
open your hand to her
open your hand

look at your hands
right now
look at your hands
are they open?
are they reaching out?

look at your heart
right now
is it open?
is it reaching out?

if among you
there is anyone
anyone in need

don't harden your heart
don't close your hand
open your heart
open your hand
open your hands, both hands
open your hands

3. our hearts tell us (after Psalm 27 and Mahatma Gandhi)

our hearts tell us to seek your face
and so we seek your face
god, show us your face
don't hide your face from us
show us your face

some of us are hungry, my god
some of us are hungry
so hungry that
some of us can't see your face
unless we see it in a piece of bread

show us your face
show us your face

4. all who are hungry (after the Passover Haggadah)

all who are hungry
all who are weary
all who are restless
who are hopeless
who are alone
who are in need

come and eat with us
come and rest with us
come and rest
with us

all who hunger
for freedom
all who hunger
for friendship
all who hunger
for justice
for kindness
for knowledge

all who hunger
for love
all who hunger
for peace
all who hunger
for mercy
all who hunger
for truth
all who hunger
for wisdom

**5. the least of us
(after Leviticus 19 and Matthew 25)**

I was the stranger
I was the least of us
I was the stranger
you took me in
I was naked
you clothed me
I was the stranger
I was the least of us
I was the stranger

you saw me
and you loved me
as you love yourself
the least of us, the least of us
who we are to the least of us
is who we are

I was the stranger
I was the least of us
I was thirsty
you gave me water
I was hungry
you fed me
I was a stranger
I was the least of us
I was a stranger

you saw me
and you loved me
as you love yourself
the least of us, the least of us
who we are to the least of us
is who we are

I was the stranger
I was the least of us
I was sick
you comforted me
I was imprisoned
you came to me
I was a stranger
I was the least of us
I was a stranger

you saw me
and you loved me
as you love yourself
the least of us, the least of us
who we are to the least of us
is who we are

**6. I know I should
(after H. A. Walter)**

I know I should be true
I know that there are those who trust me
I know I should be pure
I know that there are those that care
I know I should be strong
I know that there is much to suffer
I know I should be brave
I know that there is much to dare

I know that I should be a friend to all
I know that I should be giving
I know that I should be humble
I know that I should know my weakness

I know that no one is so low
that I am not their friend
I know that no one is so high
that I have no path to them
I know that no one is so poor
that I cannot feel their hunger
I know that no one is so rich
that I cannot pity them

I should be there
when someone calls on me for understanding
I should be there
when someone turns to me for help, in pain
I should be there
when someone drains the bitter cup of sorrow
I should be there
so no one ever calls for me in vain

I know I should be true
I know I should be pure
I know I should be strong
I know I should be brave

I know I should

**7. if you close your ear
(after Proverbs 21:13)**

if you close your ear to the cry of the poor
you will cry out and not be heard

if you refuse to listen to the cry of the poor
your own cry for help will not be heard

one who shuts his ear to the outcry of the poor
will also call out himself and not be answered

the one who shuts his ears to the cry of the poor
will himself also call out and not be answered

the one who shuts his ears to the cry of the poor
he too will cry out and will not be answered

those who shut their ears to the cries of the poor
will be ignored in their own time of need

those who shut their ears to the cry of the poor
will themselves call out and not be answered

whoever closes his ear to the cry of the poor
will himself call out and not be answered

whoever refuses to hear the cry of the poor
will also cry himself but he won't be answered

whoever shuts his ear to the cry of the poor
will call and not be answered

whoever shuts his ears to the cry of the poor
will also cry himself and not be heard

whoever shuts his ears to the cry of the poor
he too shall cry out and receive no answer

whoever shuts their ears to the cry of the poor
will also cry out and not be answered

whoever stops his ears at the cry of the poor
he will also cry out but shall not be heard

8. prayer for kindness

I need your kindness
your kindness

9. what is mine

(after Elizabeth Warren, Barack Obama and Saint Basil the Great)

what is mine?
what belongs to me?
what belongs to me alone?
what is something I have made myself?
what is mine?
what belongs to me?

what do I have that's mine alone?
what do I know I that learned myself?
what have I made that I made by myself?
what have I done without the help of others?

what is mine?
what belongs to me?
what belongs to me alone?
what is something I have made myself?
what is mine?
what belongs to me?

the bread on my table belongs to me
the bread in my cupboard belongs
to those who have none

the coat on my back belongs to me
the coat in my closet belongs to
to those who have none

the shoes on my feet belong to me
the shoes in my closet belong
to those who have none

10. take nothing with you (after Luke 9:3)

take nothing for the journey
take nothing for the road
take nothing for the way
take nothing for your journey
take nothing with you for the trip

don't take anything along on the trip
don't take anything along on your trip
don't take anything with you
don't have two shirts each
don't take an extra shirt

let no one take a second shirt

neither a staff
neither a walking stick
neither bread
neither have two coats apiece
neither have two coats each
neither have two coats
neither have two shirts
neither money
neither moneybag
neither staff
neither staffs
neither stick
neither two shirts will be with you
neither walking stick

no bag
no beggar's bag
no bread
no extra shirt
no food
no money
no second shirt
no staff
no staffs
no traveling bag
no walking stick

nor a bag
nor bag
nor bread
nor food
nor have two shirts apiece
nor leather pouch
nor money
nor pack
nor sack
nor scrip
nor wallet

not even an extra shirt

take nothing for the journey
take nothing for the road
take nothing for the way
take nothing for your journey
take nothing with you for the trip

you shall take nothing for the road

11. what remains (after the sayings of the fathers and Matthew 6)

what remains when I am gone?
what remains?
what will I leave behind me?
what will remain when I am gone?

- what remains when we are gone?
- what will we leave behind?

my good deeds will remain
will remain

- our good deeds will remain
- our good deeds are all we have
- the good we have done will remain

not my gold
not my silver
not my jewels
not my pearls

- not our gold
- not our silver
- not our jewels
- not our pearls

not my body
not my breath
not my self
not my voice

- not our bodies
- not our breath
- not our selves
- not our voices

don't put your faith in treasures
don't put your faith in things
that moth and rust destroy
that thieves can see and steal

clothe yourself in your good deeds

**12. things that never fail
(after 1 Corinthians 13)**

if I could see everything
if I could say everything
if I could know everything
if I could have everything

without charity
without justice
without kindness
without love

in my life

I would not have anything

charity is patient
it does not boast
it is not proud
it is not rude
it is not self-seeking
or easily angered
it rejoices in the truth

justice is patient
it does not boast
it is not proud
it is not rude
it is not self-seeking
or easily angered
it rejoices in the truth

kindness is patient
it does not boast
it is not proud
it is not rude
it is not self-seeking
or easily angered
it rejoices in the truth

love is patient
it does not boast
it is not proud
it is not rude
it is not self-seeking
or easily angered
it rejoices in the truth

charity bears all things
and justice hopes all things
and kindness believes all things
and love endures all things

charity never fails
justice never fails
kindness never fails
love never fails

13. I saw a poor man – choral return

I saw a man
I saw a poor man
I saw a poor man
fall

I saw a man
I saw a poor man
in a corner
with no food

I saw a man
I saw a poor man
a poor young man
feeling sad, praying
bending over his plough
hanging on to his plough

I saw a poor man
I saw a poor man
he was begging
he was trudging, barefoot
he was asking for food
he was asking me for food

he was walking by himself
on the street, barefoot
an obscure man
weeping
staring at me

I saw a man
I saw a poor man
I saw a poor man
fall

**14. wherever charity is
(after Tolstoy, after Ubi caritas)**

wherever charity is
is where we are

wherever justice is
is where we are

wherever kindness is
is where we are

wherever love is
is where we are

is where we are

wherever charity is
wherever justice is
wherever kindness is
wherever love is

here we are

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

The Crossing

The Crossing is a Grammy® Award-winning professional chamber choir conducted by Donald Nally and dedicated to new music. It is committed to working with creative teams to make and record new, substantial works for choir that explore and expand ways of writing for choir, singing in choir and listening to music for choir. Many of its nearly 180 commissioned premieres address social, environmental and political issues. With a commitment to recording its commissions, The Crossing has issued 31 releases, receiving three Grammy Awards for Best Choral Performance (2018, 2019, 2023) and nine Grammy nominations.

The 2023-2024 season includes performances in Stockholm, Helsinki, Houston and Philadelphia with major new works from Tania León, David Lang, David T. Little, Ayanna Woods and Gavin Bryars. Recent projects included Michael Gordon's *Travel Guide to Nicaragua*, commissioned for The Crossing by Carnegie Hall and Penn Live Arts; John Luther Adam's *Vespers of the Blessed Earth* with the Philadelphia Orchestra, also at Carnegie Hall; Julia Wolfe's *unEarth* with the New York Philharmonic in its inaugural season in the new Geffen Hall; Shara Nova's *Titration* at Muziekgebouw in Amsterdam; a tour featuring a world premiere of Jennifer Higdon and additional commissioned works of Caroline Shaw and Edie Hill; and Ted Hearne's *Farming*, premiering in a field at Kings Oaks Farm in Bucks County, PA, and touring to Haarlem, The Netherlands and Caramoor Center for Music and Arts.

The Crossing collaborates with some of the world's most accomplished ensembles and artists, including the Philadelphia Orchestra, the New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, American Composers Orchestra, Network for New Music, Lyric Fest, Allora & Calzadilla, Bang on a Can, Klockriketeatern and the International Contemporary Ensemble. Similarly, The Crossing often collaborates with some of world's most prestigious venues and presenters, such as the Park Avenue Armory, Penn Live Arts at the University of Pennsylvania, David Geffen Hall at Lincoln Center, Disney Hall in Los Angeles, the Cleveland Museum of Art, the Menil Collection in Houston, the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston, The Big Sing (formerly Haarlem Choral Biennale) in The Netherlands, The Finnish National Opera in Helsinki, The Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., Philadelphia Museum of Art, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Carnegie Hall, Winter Garden with WNYC, and Yale, Harvard, Duke, Northwestern, Colgate and Notre Dame universities.

The Crossing, with Donald Nally, is *Musical America's* 2024 Ensemble of the Year. The Crossing was the American Composers Forum's 2017 Champion of New Music and were the recipients of the 2015 Margaret Hillis Award for Choral Excellence, three ASCAP Awards for Adventurous Programming and the Dale Warland Singers Commission Award from Chorus America. The Crossing is represented by Alliance Artist Management.

Donald Nally (Conductor)

Nally collaborates with creative artists, leading orchestras and art museums to make new works for choir that address social and environmental issues. He has commissioned over 180 works and, with his ensemble, The Crossing, has produced 31 recordings, winning three Grammy® Awards for Best Choral Performance, while nominated nine times. He has held distinguished tenures as chorus master for Lyric Opera of Chicago, Welsh National Opera, Opera Philadelphia and for many seasons at Il festival dei due mondi in Spoleto, Italy. He has worked closely with the artists Allora & Calzadilla and composer David Lang on museum projects in London, Porto, Cordoba, Edmonton, Houston, Osaka and Philadelphia. He has been visiting resident artist at the Park Avenue Armory; music director of *the mile-long opera*, David Lang's 1000-voice work on The High Line in Manhattan; and chorus master for works of Lang, Julia Wolfe, John Luther Adams and Louis Andriessen for the LA Philharmonic, New York Philharmonic and the Philadelphia Orchestra at Carnegie Hall. His sixty-chapter series *Rising w/ The Crossing*, a response to the 2020 pandemic, has been archived by The Library of Congress as a cultural artifact. Recent projects include the Swedish Radio Choir, Klockriketeatern at the Finnish National Opera, the Baltic Sea Festival, the Big Ears Festival, Chicago Symphony Orchestra's MusicNOW, Carnegie Hall and the Haarlem KoorBiënnale. Nally is a frequent guest artist/teacher at universities, including Yale, Harvard, the University of Chicago, Indiana, Notre Dame and Boston Conservatory. He is the John W. Beattie Chair of Music Emeritus at Northwestern University.

David Lang (Composer)

Lang is one of the most highly esteemed and performed American composers writing today. His works have been performed around the world in most of the great concert halls. Lang's *the little match girl passion*, commissioned by Carnegie Hall and premiered by Paul Hillier and Theatre of Voices, was recently listed by *The Guardian* as "one of the top 25 works of classical music written in the 21st Century." It won the Pulitzer Prize in 2008 and the recording received a Grammy® Award in 2010. *simple song #3*, written as part of his score for Paolo Sorrentino's acclaimed film, *YOUTH*, received many award nominations in 2016, including the Academy Award and Golden Globe.

His opera *prisoner of the state* (with libretto by Lang) was co-commissioned by the New York Philharmonic, Rotterdam's De Doelen Concert Hall, London's Barbican Centre, Barcelona's l'Auditori, Bochum Symphony Orchestra and Bruges's Concertgebouw, and premiered June 2019 in New York (conducted by Jaap van Zweden). *prisoner of the state* received its UK premiere in January 2020 with the BBC Symphony (conducted by Ilan Volkov) and its EU premiere in May 2023 with the Bochum Sinfoniker (conducted by Steven Sloane).

Lang is a Professor of Music Composition at the Yale School of Music. He is co-founder and co-artistic director of New York's legendary music collective, Bang on a Can.

UPCOMING PERFORMANCES



Bartok's Monster

Daedalus Quartet with
Sebastienne Mundheim & Pig Iron School
JAN 21

JACK Quartet

Beautiful Trouble
FEB 2

Mariana Sadovska

The Night is Just Beginning
MAR 1

Alarm Will Sound

APR 14

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