

# THE CROSSING

**DONALD NALLY**, conductor

FEATURING THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA'S **KANTOREI** 

Thursday, February 13, 2025 7:30 p.m. Voxman Music Building



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The Larry G. and Ann Howard Jones Vocal Ensemble Residency Program

## THE CROSSING

DONALD NALLY, conductor
Featuring the University of Iowa's KANTOREI

Thursday, February 13, 2025, at 7:30 p.m. Voxman Music Building, the University of Iowa Concert Hall / Auditorium Seating

#### **PROGRAM**

Robert CONVERY Voyages

III IV V

with Kantorei

David LANG

#### poor hymnal

- 1. I saw a poor man
- 2. open your hands (after deuteronomy 15)
- 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)
- prayer for kindness
- 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)

## THE CROSSING

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**Voyages** (1993)

Music by Robert Convery Text by Hart Crane

#### A NOTE FROM THE COMPOSER:

Hart Crane's poem, Voyages, is a collection of six lyrical poems that he wrote to his absent lover. a merchant seaman named Emil Opffer. In parts three, four, and five, the speaker in the poem imagines possibilities to sustain him through the pain of their separation, and dreams of his lover's presence by contemplating the marriage of sea and sky, as well as the bay into which his lover's ship will eventually sail on its return. With rich imagery, it charts a journey from innocence to a joy shaped by life's dualities where pain and beauty intertwine. This journey calls for surrender, a leap of faith that transforms suffering into the discovery of love's unvielding essence. In the end, Crane presents a vision of iovresilient, eternal, and illuminated by the depth of experience.

Donald Nally commissioned Voyages as his first major work during his choral directorship at West Chester University in West Chester, Pennsylvania. Robert Convery was inspired by Hart Crane's poem, and struck by its intensely beautiful and seemingly incomprehensible imagery. The piece was written in eight days during the Festival dei Due Mondi in Spoleto, Italy, in a room carved out of the side of a mountain. It was in the basement of the Teatro Nuovo, a 19th-century opera house. The six movements of Voyages comprise a set of variations. The thematic material for each movement is drawn from the preceding movement. The movements travel in a thirddegree harmonic progression, beginning and ending in A Major. These musical considerations were made to correspond to the same kaleidoscopic center, the ever-growing changeability in gaining self-knowledge through the understanding of love, the single theme of Hart Crane's diversely symbolic cycle of poems.

## **VOYAGES**

Text by Hart Crane (1899-1932)

III.

Infinite consanguinity it bears—
This tendered theme of you that light
Retrieves from sea plains where the sky
Resigns a breast that every wave enthrones;
While ribboned water lanes I wind
Are laved and scattered with no stroke
Wide from your side, whereto this hour
The sea lifts, also, reliquary hands.

And so, admitted through black swollen gates That must arrest all distance otherwise,—Past whirling pillars and lithe pediments, Light wrestling there incessantly with light, Star kissing star through wave on wave unto Your body rocking!

and where death, if shed, Presumes no carnage, but this single change,— Upon the steep floor flung from dawn to dawn The silken skilled transmemberment of song; Permit me voyage, love, into your hands ...

#### IV.

Whose counted smile of hours and days, suppose I know as spectrum of the sea and pledge Vastly now parting gulf on gulf of wings Whose circles bridge, I know, (from palms to the severe Chilled albatross's white immutability)
No stream of greater love advancing now Than, singing, this mortality alone Through clay aflow immortally to you.

All fragrance irrefragably, and claim
Madly meeting logically in this hour
And region that is ours to wreathe again,
Portending eyes and lips and making told
The chancel port and portion of our June—

Shall they not stem and close in our own steps Bright staves of flowers and quills today as I Must first be lost in fatal tides to tell?

In signature of the incarnate word
The harbor shoulders to resign in mingling
Mutual blood, transpiring as foreknown
And widening noon within your breast for gathering
All bright insinuations that my years have caught
For islands where must lead inviolably
Blue latitudes and levels of your eyes,—

In this expectant, still exclaim receive The secret oar and petals of all love.

#### V.

Meticulous, past midnight in clear rime, Infrangible and lonely, smooth as though cast Together in one merciless white blade— The bay estuaries fleck the hard sky limits.

As if too brittle or too clear to touch!
 The cables of our sleep so swiftly filed,
 Already hang, shred ends from remembered stars.
 One frozen trackless smile ... What words
 Can strangle this deaf moonlight? For we

Are overtaken. Now no cry, no sword Can fasten or deflect this tidal wedge, Slow tyranny of moonlight, moonlight loved And changed ... "There's

Nothing like this in the world," you say, Knowing I cannot touch your hand and look Too, into that godless cleft of sky Where nothing turns but dead sands flashing.

"—And never to quite understand!" No, In all the argosy of your bright hair I dreamed Nothing so flagless as this piracy.

But now

Draw in your head, alone and too tall here. Your eyes already in the slant of drifting foam; Your breath sealed by the ghosts I do not know: Draw in your head and sleep the long way home. **poor hymnal** (2023) words and music by David Lang

Co-commissioned by The Crossing and Donald Nally (with support from Elizabeth and Justus Schlichting, Jill and Loren Bough, and Peggy and Mark Curchack) and the Nederlands Kamerkoor.

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

#### A 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.

## poor hymnal

Words and music by David Lang

#### 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 that I 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 staffs
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

## THE CROSSING

Musical America's 2024 Ensemble of the Year, The Crossing, is committed to collaborating with creative teams to make and record new, substantial works for choir, often addressing issues of social justice. The Crossing has recorded 36 albums, receiving four Grammy Awards for Best Choral Performance (2018, 2019, 2023, 2025), and 10 nominations. The Crossing collaborates with some of the world's leading composers, ensembles, artists, venues, and presenters, including the New York Philharmonic, The Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Philadelphia Orchestra, Lincoln Center, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Park Avenue Armory, the Baltic Sea Festival in Stockholm, the Cleveland Museum of Art, the Menil Collection in Houston, National Sawdust, the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum



in Boston, Haarlem Choral Biennale in the Netherlands, the Finnish National Opera in Helsinki, the Kennedy Center, Philadelphia Museum of Art, and Carnegie Hall. The Crossing is represented by Alliance Artist Management.

## **DONALD NALLY**MUSIC DIRECTOR

Donald 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 nearly 200 works and, with his ensemble The Crossing (Musical America's 2024 Ensemble of the Year), has produced thirty-four recordings, winning four Grammy Awards for Best Choral Performance, while being nominated nine times.

Donald has held distinguished tenures as chorus master for Lyric Opera of Chicago, Welsh National Opera, Opera Philadelphia, and for many seasons at II festival dei due mondi in Spoleto, Italy. He has prepared choruses for many internationally recognized conductors at the Philadelphia Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Grant Park Symphony Orchestra, Philharmonia Orchestra (London), American Composers Orchestra, the BBC Symphony Orchestra, and the Spoleto Festival Orchestra.

Donald works 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 and music director of *The Mile Long Opera*, David Lang's 1000-voice work on The High Line in Manhattan.



The 2024–2025 season includes collaborations with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Boston Symphony, performances with The Crossing at Carnegie Hall, Alice Tully Hall, Drake University, McCarter Theater in Princeton, and Abendmusik in Lincoln; guest artist/teacher residencies at Boston University, the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, and the University of Iowa.

Donald is the John W. Beattie Chair of Music Emeritus at Northwestern University. He is Visiting Professor of Choral Studies at Westminster Choir College of Rider University during the 2024–2025 season.

# ROBERT CONVERY COMPOSER

Robert Convery studied at
The Curtis Institute of Music,
Westminster Choir College, and
The Juilliard School where he
received his doctorate in musical
composition. His teachers
have been Ned Rorem, David
Diamond, Gian Carlo Menotti,
Vincent Persichetti, and Richard
Hundley. Mr. Convery has received
commissioning grants from the
National Endowment for the Arts,
The Rockefeller Foundation, The
Pew Charitable Trusts, and Opera
America.



## DAVID LANG COMPOSER

David 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 awards nominations in 2016, including the Academy Award and Golden Globe.

His opera prisoner of the state (with libretto by Lang) was cocommissioned 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 U.K. premiere in January 2020 with the BBC Symphony (conducted by Ilan Volkov) and its E.U. 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. (Lang received his Master of Music from the University of Iowa in 1980). He is co-founder and co-artistic director of New York's legendary music collective Bang on a Can.

His music is published by Red Poppy Music and G. Ricordi & Co., New York (ASCAP) and is is distributed worldwide by the Universal Music Publishing Group.

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**SCHUMANN QUARTET – SOLD OUT** Sunday, February 16 / 7:30 p.m.

CLUB HANCHER:

ZAINAB JOHNSON – sold out Thursday, February 20 / 7:30 p.m.

BEN LAMAR GAY ENSEMBLE AND ISAIAH COLLIER & THE CHOSEN FEW FEATURING JIMETTA ROSE Saturday, February 22 / 6:00 p.m.

SHAMEL PITTS | TRIBE, TOUCH OF RED Friday & Saturday, February 28 & March 1 / 7:30 p.m.

### March

#### MEAN GIRLS

Friday, March 7 / 7:30 p.m. Saturday, March 8 / 2:00 p.m. & 7:30 p.m. Sunday, March 9 / 2:00 p.m.

ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER Tuesday, March 11 / 7:30 p.m.

#### JERUSALEM QUARTET

Thursday, March 27 / 6:00 p.m. & 8:00 p.m.

THE ACTING COMPANY AUGUST WILSON'S TWO TRAINS RUNNING Friday, March 28 / 7:30 pm WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S THE COMEDY OF ERRORS Saturday, March 29 / 7:30 pm

## April

#### MARA LIASSON

The Spring 2025 Levitt Lecture Tuesday, April 1 / 7:30 p.m.

JULIEN BAKER & TORRES LA LOM RACHEL KUSHNER & KIM GORDON Part of Mission Creek Festival Thursday, April 3 / 6:00 p.m. CLUB HANCHER:

GABY MORENO

Thursday, April 10 / 7:00 p.m. & 9:00 p.m.

CLUB HANCHER: SEAN MASON OUARTET

Friday, April 11 / 7:00 p.m. & 9:00 p.m.

CLUB HANCHER:

THE WEATHER STATION
Saturday, April 12 / 7:30 p.m.

THE SAINT PAUL CHAMBER ORCHESTRA Sunday, April 13 / 7:30 p.m.

DAVÓNE TINES & THE TRUTH ROBESON

Wednesday, April 16 / 7:30 p.m.

DAVÓNE TINES

RECITAL NO. 1: MASS Saturday, April 19 / 7:30 p.m.

IRON & WINE
WITH SUPPORT BY JOBI RICCIO
Monday, April 21 / 7:00 p.m.

THIRD COAST PERCUSSION AND JESSIE MONTGOMERY STRUM, STRIKE, BEND Thursday, April 24 / 7:30 p.m.

## May

**RIVERDANCE 30 — THE NEW GENERATION** Friday, May 9 / 7:30 p.m.
Saturday, May 10 / 2:00 p.m. & 7:30 p.m.
Sunday, May 11 / 1:00 p.m. & 6:30 p.m.

