Crumb: *Ancient Voices of Children*, First Movement

**DATE OF WORK:** 1970

**GENRE:** Song cycle (5 songs and 2 instrumental interludes)

**TEXT:** Poems by Federico García Lorca

**WHAT TO LISTEN FOR:** Opening vocalise, or wordless melody, with many virtuosic effects (flutter tonguing, hissing, clicking, trills); voice used instrumentally. Rhapsodic, improvisatory-like vocal line. Voice singing into amplified piano, producing sympathetic vibrations. Pure timbre of boy soprano (on second verse), singing offstage.

1. **The Little Boy Is Looking for His Voice (El niño busca su voz)**

   **Medium:** Soprano, boy soprano, electric piano, harp, tam-tam (gong), other percussion

   **TEXT**
   
   El niño busca su voz.
   (La tenía el rey de los grillos.) (The king of the crickets had it.)
   En una gota de agua
   buscaba su voz el niño.
   No la quiero para hablar;
   me haré con ella un anillo
   que llevará mi silencio
   en su dedo pequeño.

   **TRANSLATION**
   
   The little boy is looking for his voice.
   (The king of the crickets had it.)
   In a drop of water
   the little boy looked for his voice.
   I don’t want it to speak;
   I will make a ring of it
   so that he may wear my silence
   on his little finger.

   **DESCRIPTION**
   Opens with an elaborate vocalise for soprano, including cries, trills, other vocal gymnastics; she sings into piano with pedal down for resonance.

   **Strophe 1**—sung by soprano alone with turns, trills, hisses; she continues with low-pitched recitation.

   **Strophe 2**—overlaps strophe 1; boy soprano sings offstage, through cardboard tube; folk-like character to melody.