

A FAR CRY

Described as offering “a refreshing corrective to classical music’s rigid hierarchies” by WBUR, A Far Cry is known for its innovative and compelling programs, stellar communication, and a democratic process that is the group’s north star. A Far Cry was founded in 2007 on the belief that every voice deserves to be heard; so instead of one artistic director, the collective of musicians (“Criers”) curate and submit program ideas inspired by individual curiosities, and what is happening in the world at large. The result is ensemble playing at its most intimate, representing a diverse mix of music and collaborators.

This inherent sense of curiosity led the *Boston Globe* to say that “even though A Far Cry has decisively established itself as a mainstay of the Boston musical community, something about it feels perpetually fresh with every performance.” A Far Cry has risen to the top of *Billboard’s* Traditional Classical Chart, and garnered two Grammy nominations. In 2023, in a testament to the group’s strength as a collaborator, all three albums the A Far Cry released were nominated for a Grammy Award. This includes *The Blue Hour* (New Amsterdam and Nonesuch Records), *Stillpoint* (New Amsterdam Records), and *A Gentleman of Istanbul* (Crier Records).

AFC’s 2023-24 season continues the group’s tradition of musical storytelling. In each of the nine programs – curated by a different Crier (and voted on by all 17) – A Far Cry seeks to do its part in reinforcing the idea of a “world that listens.” Composers range from Bach, Beethoven and Mozart, to Shelley Washington, Paul Wiancko, Vijay Iyer, Anna Thorvaldsdottir, and a newly commissioned work by Jungyoon Wie. The orchestra’s subscription series includes five programs at New England Conservatory’s Jordan Hall, and four chamber music concerts at St. John’s Episcopal Church in Jamaica Plain. Additionally, A Far Cry continues its residency at Longy School of Music with three concerts, and performs Tchaikovsky’s *Serenade for Strings* on the Celebrity Series of Boston in February. In March, the group takes its “At Odds” program on the road with a performance at NYC’s Merkin Hall as part of AFC’s 2023-24 residency at the Kaufman Music Center.

A Far Cry’s omnivorous approach has led to collaborations with artists such as Yo-Yo Ma, Simone Dinnerstein, Dinuk Wijeratne, Roomful of Teeth, the Silk Road Ensemble, Vijay Iyer, and David Krakauer, to name a few. Highlights include new commissioning projects: Philip Glass’ third piano concerto with soloist Simone Dinnerstein, and *The Blue Hour*, “a gorgeous and remarkably unified work” (*Washington Post*) written by a collaborative of five leading female composers – Rachel Grimes, Angélica Negrón, Shara Nova, Caroline Shaw, and Sarah Kirkland Snider. *The Blue Hour* was released in partnership with New Amsterdam and Nonesuch Records, and was named a Top 10 Album of the year by NPR. In 2023, the group recorded and toured pianist Awadagin Pratt’s *STILLPOINT* project, which features music by Alvin Singleton, Jessie Montgomery, Judd Greenstein, Paola Prestini, Pēteris Vasks, and Tyshawn Sorey. The album, out on New Amsterdam, was called “perhaps the finest of his [Pratt’s] career” by NPR.

A Far Cry’s Crier Records launched auspiciously in 2014 with the Grammy-nominated album *Dreams and Prayers*. The label’s second release, *Law of Mosaics*, was included on many top

10 lists, notably from *The New Yorker's* Alex Ross and WQXR, which named A Far Cry as one of the "Imagination-Grabbing, Trailblazing Artists of 2014." The 2018 release, *Visions and Variations*, received two Grammy nominations, including one for Best Chamber Music Performance. In 2023, Crier Records released Mehmet Ali Sanlıkol's *A Gentleman of Istanbul*, which the group commissioned in 2017. *San Francisco Classical Voice* called the work a "dazzling multicultural symphony." The album received a 2023 Grammy Nomination for Best Engineered Album (Classical).

The Criers are proud to call Boston home, and maintain strong roots in the city, rehearsing at their storefront music center in Jamaica Plain. The group recently celebrated the conclusion of a 10-year residency at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum. Collaborating with local students through educational partnerships with the New England Conservatory, Longy School of Music, and Project STEP, A Far Cry aims to pass on the spirit of collaboratively-empowered music to the next generation.