

CONNOR CHEE

SANDPAINTINGS

for Piano

Inspired not only by the imagery of traditional Diné sandpaintings, but by the enduring principles of balance that shape them

ABOUT THE WORK

Sandpaintings for Piano is a sixteen-movement solo piano cycle inspired by the artistic principles and structural design of traditional Diné sandpaintings. Rather than simply depicting their imagery, the work draws upon the underlying ideas that shape them: symmetry, reflection, and the enduring principles of transformation and balance. Organized around the four sacred directions, the cycle unfolds in a clockwise progression from East to South, West, and finally North, mirroring the ordered movement found in both the traditional Diné hogan and many sandpainting designs. Themes introduced in the Northern direction serve as the source material for the entire cycle, appearing as inversions in the East, retrograde inversions in the South, and retrogrades in the West before returning in their original form in the North.

While the music draws inspiration from common visual elements found in traditional Diné sandpaintings, it respectfully avoids ceremonial imagery reserved for sacred contexts. Instead, the work reimagines those images through a contemporary musical language, allowing ideas of order, transformation, and restoration to unfold. Only in the Northern direction do the themes appear in their original form, completing the musical journey through a quiet restoration of balance.

ABOUT CONNOR CHEE

Connor Chee is a Diné (Navajo) pianist and composer whose music brings cultural traditions into dialogue with contemporary classical composition. His works have been commissioned, performed, and recorded by artists and ensembles throughout the world, and his music has reached national audiences through broadcasts on NPR's Performance Today. As both composer and performer, Chee has developed a body of work that reflects a distinctly Diné perspective while expanding the contemporary piano repertoire through music of architectural imagination, artistic integrity, and expressive depth.

LISTENING GUIDE

7. *Southern Lightning*
   Brilliant energy and virtuosic momentum.

6. *Southern Clouds*
   Shimmering lyricism unfolding from quiet simplicity.

13. *Jet*
    A contemplative melody gradually revealing its full resonance.

14. *Northern Clouds*
    The emotional destination of the cycle, where the music finds stillness and balance.

ALBUM INFORMATION

Release Date	July 31, 2026
Format	Digital, Stereo and Dolby Atmos
Genre	Contemporary Classical
Tracks	16
Runtime	39:32
Composer/Piano	Connor Chee
Producers	Patrick Conlon and Christina Giacona
Recorded at	University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma
Distributor	AvidPlay
EAN (Stereo)	5063752594246
EAN (Dolby Atmos)	5063752627043
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