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A Turkey as Tourist

If someone told you that a place was for the birds, you probably wouldn't want to visit it. But suppose you were a bird and a member of a species that is notoriously, shall we say, intellectually challenged?

That is the premise behind "Tough Turkey in the Big City," a new work composed by Bruce Adolphe. When Tom, the title character, overhears Farmer Brown's disparaging comments about the big city, he completely misinterprets them, along with a lot of other things.

"Tom sees a sign saying, 'We serve turkey,'" Mr. Adolphe said. In fact the script, by Louise Gikow, "is peppered with lots of double-entendres and puns," he added.

Fortunately Tom avoids being peppered himself, although he has a lot of near misses. Children will be invited to follow his adventures on Sunday, when "Tough Turkey" has its New York premiere at a Meet the Music! concert by the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center.

"Louise and I wanted a little bit of a film noir quality, like an old Bogart movie but funny," Mr. Adolphe said.

The humor, though, will be heard rather than seen. Mr. Adolphe, at the piano, will narrate, with various instruments playing characters ranging from a duck (trumpet) to a pigeon (clarinet). "The music starts with a kind of barnyard counterpoint and then moves into what I call a metropolitan polyphony," he said.

David Taylor on bass trombone will play Tom. "Dave is a good actor," Mr. Adolphe said. "When I suggested to him that he be a turkey, he said, 'Oh, a turkey in a city, that's my life, man.'"