Programme Notes

JOHN ADAMS CONDUCTS ADAMS, GLASS AND REICH

FRI 15 OCTOBER 2021 • 20.15



PROGRAMME

conductor John Adams piano Katia Labèque piano Marielle Labèque

Steve Reich *1936 Three Movements for Orchestra [1986] • quarter note=176

- quarter note=88
- quarter note=176

Philip Glass *1937 Concerto for two Pianos and Orchestra [2014-15]

- I. • II. –
- III. -

Intermission

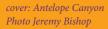
John Adams *1947 Naive and Sentimental Music [1999/2021, Dutch premiere revised version]

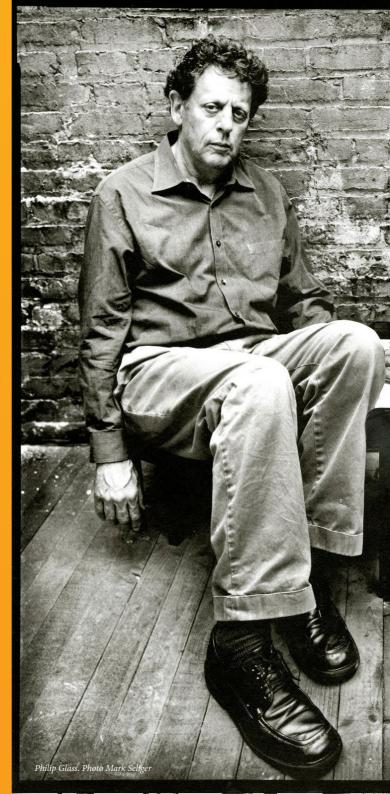
- Naive and Sentimental Music
- Mother of the Man
- Chain to the Rhythm

Concert ends at around 22.30

Most recent performances by our orchestra: **Reich** Three Movements: first performance

Glass Concerto for Two Pianos: first performance Adams Naive and Sentimental Music: first performance







WHAT EXACTLY IS MINIMAL?

It has often been said that the term 'minimal music' is misleading and a generalisation. But the label that Steve Reich and Philip Glass acquired more than fifty years ago still attaches to them today, despite their fundamental differences and contrasting way in which each of them developed. The somewhat younger John Adams was initially labelled a minimalist, but he turned out to be a composer whose style is hard to pigeonhole - although definitely with minimalist tendencies. The works on this programme prove how rich, varied and exuberant 'minimal' can be.

Strictly speaking, Reich and Glass were not the founders of a new style. The pioneers were the 'musical gurus' La Monte Young and Terry Riley, who based their compositions on a single note. Riley became an icon of East Coast hippie culture; Reich and Glass ended up in downtown New York. Glass later said that, alongside Riley's influence, the inspiration came 'from outside'. Reich experimented with tape recorders playing in canon or where the same recording begins at slightly different times; he also took an in-depth look at in African drumming and traditional Jewish song. Glass, meanwhile, was inspired by Indian music.

Their works – harmonically accessible, and almost hypnotic in their repeated motifs and strict rhythmic pulse – were a clear statement against the dissonant, hyper-intellectual avantgarde music from Europe. There, composers such as Stockhausen and Boulez were driving ordinary concertgoers out of the halls; Reich and Glass, on the other hand, appealed to a wide, mainly young audience.

Razor-sharp timing

In his early years Reich composed ground-breaking pieces for simple line-ups: a violinist playing a duet with a tape recorder, a group of percussionists or two pairs of clapping hands. For larger pieces he formed his own ensembles, the composition of which varied. His harmonic palette grew along with the line-ups; since the 1990s it is especially the always The two sides do not vie with one another (as in a romantic concerto), but the orchestra acts as an enormous sound box that enhances and colours the piano score

strict rhythmic patterns and the repetitive motifs that are a reminder of his minimalist beginnings. In fact, Reich himself has always preferred the term 'repetitive music' to 'minimal'. And rightly so. There is nothing 'mini' about the sumptuous sounds that he creates by allowing short motifs to overlap.

Another change was Reich's dislike of the traditional symphony orchestra. This was principally for practical reasons: the metronomic rhythm that he demands is hard to achieve with such large forces. But now that virtually all orchestral musicians have pop music (and sometimes minimal music) in their repertoire Reich can count on razor-sharp timing. The first rapprochement was the Three Movements from 1986 - a symphonic work, even though Reich adapted the set-up of the orchestra according to his needs. The mallet percussion and two pianos are placed directly in front of the conductor, so that the ongoing rhythm of the piece can be achieved as accurately as possible. They are flanked by two string sections that continually echo, overlap and overtake each other. What you hear is still a predominantly Western classical lineup, but with Reich it sounds like a set of exotic instruments from a country that you cannot quite identify...

Sound box

Even more than Reich, Philip Glass built a bridge between classical and pop, for instance by making more frequent use of synthesizers and other electronic instruments. Glass admits that he is equally happy composing for electronic instruments or for a traditional orchestra, although he has tended more towards classical line-ups over the last 20 years. He certainly does not share Reich's dislike of symphony orchestras: he has so far written twelve symphonies and a variety of concertos. Glass is clearly also more of a theatre man, as witness the operas, ballets and film music he has composed.

Glass composed this Double Concerto for the piano duo Labèque, with whom he has worked on numerous occasions. It is music whose creator vou can recognise from the very beginning: a mobile mosaic of melodious triads that continually behave slightly differently from what you expect. That whimsicality betrays Glass's familiarity with Indian music, in which repeated melodic patterns gradually change by the omission or addition of a single note. Those who know his earlier work will notice that the composer sometimes ventures outside his comfort zone in this piece: the harmonies are occasionally harsher than might be expected of him. But the most idiosyncratic element is the 'balance of power' between the pianos and the orchestra. The two sides do not vie with one another (as in a romantic concerto), but the orchestra acts as an enormous sound box that enhances and colours the piano score.

Freedom

As a student, composer/conductor John Adams was strongly attracted to the sound world of Riley, Reich and Glass but his love of jazz and European classical music was too strong to allow him to steer a purely minimalist course. He regards himself as a typical American composer: one that feels free to draw his material from all stylistic periods and all parts of the world. In Naive and Sentimental Music Adams draws his inspiration from a variety of sources. The title refers to a paper by Friedrich Schiller, who made a distinction between 'naive' and 'sentimental' poetry. The first is objective and exists on its own, while 'sentimental' poets focus on their own personality, their surroundings and their historical context. But how do you create art nowadays that is not coloured by our historical legacy?

In this work. Adams tried to create an unadulterated sound, without echoes of the past or autobiographical elements. A bold undertaking: if you compose for an 'antique' medium such as an orchestra, you cannot of course ignore earlier orchestral composers. But Adams also knew that he could express himself spontaneously and objectively in orchestral music. That resulted in a piece in which echoes of Anton Bruckner can be heard (in the slow passages of the first movement), in which the orchestration demonstrates Adams's love of jazz and whose final movement appeals to the lover of minimalism. So in the end you do not hear any of the 'usual suspects'. Apparently Adams's naivety overcomes his sentiments, contrary to his own expectations.

Michiel Cleij



John Adams: Photo Musacchio-Ianniello-Pasqualini

John Adams, Conductor

Born: Worcester, USA

Education: conducting and composition at Harvard University with Leon Kirchner, David del Tredici, Roger Sessions

Awards: Erasmus Prize (2019); Pulitzer Prize for Music (2003) for On the Transmigration of Souls, for the victims of the 11 September attacks in New York 2001; Finalist for the Pulitzer Prize for Music, for Century Rolls (1998); Grawemeyer Award (1995)

Honorary doctorates: Harvard, Yale, Northwestern University, Cambridge University, Juilliard School of Music, Royal Academy of Music

Guest conductor: Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra, Vienna Symphony Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, orchestras from Seattle, Cincinnati, Atlanta, Toronto

Orchestral works: Harmonielehre (1984), The Chairman Dances (1985), Violin Concerto (1993)

Operas: Nixon in China (1985), The Death of Klinghofer (1992), Doctor Atomic (2004), Girls from the Golden West (2017)

Debut Rotterdam Philharmonic: 2021

Katia en Marielle Labèque, Piano duo

Born: Bayonne, France

Education: Conservatoire de Paris

Specialized in: repertoire for four hands and repertoire for two pianos

Breakthrough: 1980, with the CD recording of Gershwins Rhapsody in Blue for two pianos Solo duo with: Gewandhaus Orchestra Leipzig, Berlin Philharmonic, Staatskapelle Dresden, London Philharmonic, London Symphony Orchestra, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, symphony orchestras from Boston and Chicago

World premieres: works by Thomas Adès, Louis Andriessen, Olivier Messiaen, Luciano Berio, Pierre Boulez, Bryce Dessner, Philip Glass, György Ligeti, Nico Muhly

Significant project: Bernstein's West Side Story for two pianos and percussion

Early music: on fortepianos with English Baroque Soloists, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Il Giardino Armonico, Musica Antiqua Köln

Debut Rotterdam Philharmonic: 1979



AGENDR

Fri 29 October 2021 • 20.15

Sun 31 October 2021 • 14.15 conductor Edo de Waart bassoon Pieter Nuytten Dvořák Serenade for Winds Weber Andante e Rondo ongarese Dvořák Symphony No. 9 'From the New World'

Sat 30 October 2021 • 19.00

Halloween Fright Concert (6+) conductor Adam Hickox actor Michel Sorbach staging/text Bart Oomen film animation Sebastiaan de Ruiter music by Mussorgsky, Saint-Saëns and Dukas

Thu 4 November 2021 • 20.15 Fri 5 November 2021 • 20.15 Sun 7 November 2021 • 14.15

conductor Lahav Shani cello Nicolas Altstaedt Bloch Schelomo Mahler Symphony No. 1

Fri 12 November 2021 · 20.15

conductor **Jukka-Pekka Saraste** soprano **Helena Juntunen** baritone **Tommi Hakala** choir **YL Male Voice Choir Sibelius** Kullervo

Sun 14 November 2021 • 14.15

conductor **Jukka-Pekka Saraste** soprano **Helena Juntunen** baritone **Tommi Hakala Sibelius** Orchestral Songs **Sibelius** The Bard **Sibelius** Lemminkäinen Suite

Wed 1 December 2021 • 14.00 and 16.00

Sint Sing-Along (3+) members of the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra together with Hofplein Rotterdam Sinterklaas songs



Chief Conductor Lahav Shani

Honorary Conductor Valery Gergiev Yannick Nézet-Séguin

First violin

Igor Gruppman, concertmaster Marieke Blankestiin, concertmaster **Quirine Scheffers** Hed Yaron Meyerson Saskia Otto Arno Bons Mireille van der Wart Shelly Greenberg Cor van der Linden Rachel Browne Maria Dingian Marie-José Schrijner Noëmi Bodden Petra Visser Sophia Torrenga Hadewijch Hofland Annerien Stuker Alexandra van Beveren Koen Stapert

Second violin

Charlotte Potgieter Cecilia Ziano Frank de Groot Laurens van Vliet Tomoko Hara Elina Staphorsius Jun Yi Dou Bob Bruyn Letizia Sciarone Eefje Habraken Maija Reinikainen Sumire Hara Wim Ruitenbeek Babette van den Berg Melanie Broers

MUSICIANS

Viola

Anne Huser Roman Spitzer Maartje van Rheeden Galahad Samson Kerstin Bonk Lex Prummel Janine Baller Francis Saunders Veronika Lénártová Rosalinde Kluck León van den Berg

Cello

Emanuele Silvestri Joanna Pachucka Daniel Petrovitsch Mario Rio Gé van Leeuwen Eelco Beinema Carla Schrijner Pepijn Meeuws Yi-Ting Fang

Double bass

Matthew Midgley Ying Lai Green Jonathan Focquaert Robert Franenberg Harke Wiersma Arjen Leendertz Ricardo Neto

Flute

Juliette Hurel Joséphine Olech Désirée Woudenberg

Oboe

Remco de Vries Karel Schoofs Hans Cartigny Anja van der Maten

Oboe/cor anglais Ron Tijhuis

Klarinet Julien Hervé Bruno Bonansea Jan Jansen

Clarinet/ bass clarinet Romke-Jan Wijmenga

Bassoon Pieter Nuytten Marianne Prommel

Bassoon/ contra bassoon Hans Wisse

Horn

David Fernández Alonso Wendy Leliveld Richard Speetjens Laurens Otto Pierre Buizer

Trumpet

Giuliano Sommerhalder Alex Elia Simon Wierenga Jos Verspagen

Trombone

Pierre Volders Alexander Verbeek Remko de Jager

Bass Trombone/ contrabass trombone Ben van Dijk

Tuba Hendrik-Jan Renes

Timpani/ percussion

. Randy Max Danny van de Wal Ronald Ent Martijn Boom Adriaan Feyaerts

Harp Charlotte Sprenkels