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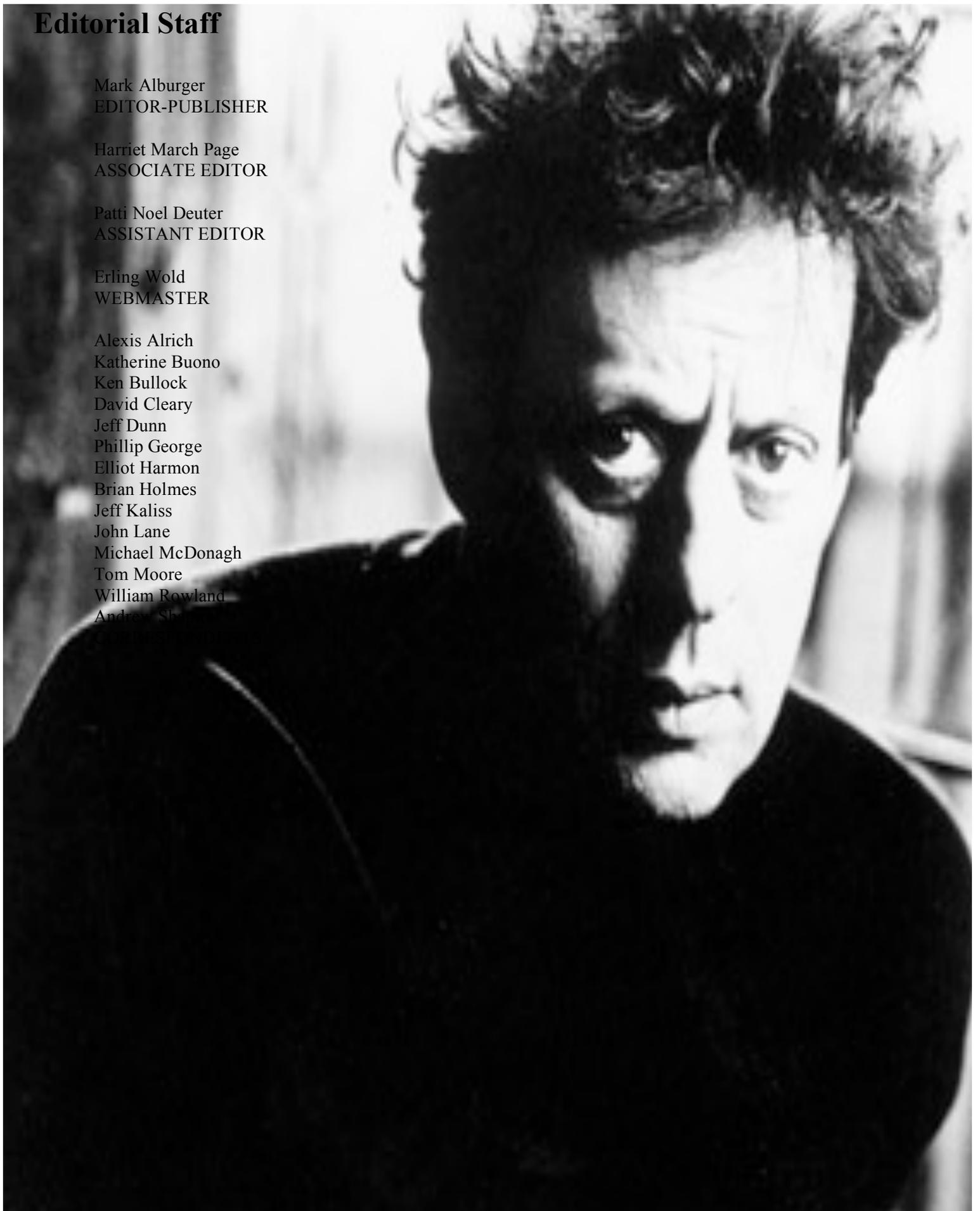
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Glass Reflected Through Decades

PHILIP GEORGE

Philip Glass (b. January 31, 1937, Baltimore, Maryland) is the son of Ida (née Gouline) and Benjamin Charles Glass, and the grandson of Jewish immigrants from Lithuania. His father owned a record store, and consequently youth's record collection consisted to a large extent of unsold records, including 20th-century composers Arnold Schoenberg, Bela Bartok, Paul Hindemith, and Dmitri Shostakovich; and classical chamber music, such as Franz Schubert's Piano Trio in B-Flat, which he has cited as a "big influence"), at a very early age.

Glass studied the flute at the Peabody Conservatory of Music and entered an accelerated college program at the University of Chicago at the age of 15, where he studied Mathematics and Philosophy. In Chicago, he discovered the serialism of Anton Webern and composed a twelve-tone string trio.

In 1954, Glass went to Paris for the first time, encountering the films of Jean Cocteau, which made a lasting impression on him. He visited frequented artist's studios and has noted "the bohemian life you see in [Cocteau's] *Orphée* was the life I (...) was attracted to, and those were the people I hung out with."

Glass then went on to the Juilliard School of Music where the keyboard became his main instrument. His composition teachers included Vincent Persichetti and William Bergsma; fellow students included Steve Reich. In 1959, he was a winner in the BMI Foundation's BMI Student Composer Awards, and the next year studied with Darius Milhaud at the summer school of the Aspen Music Festival, composing a Violin Concerto for fellow student Dorothy Pixley-Rothschild.

After leaving Juilliard in 1962, Glass moved to Pittsburgh and worked as a school-based composer-in-residence in the public schools, composing various choral, chamber, and orchestral works.

In 1964, Glass received a Fulbright Scholarship and returned to Paris, where he studied with the Nadia Boulanger through the summer of 1966. Glass's years in Paris as a student of Boulanger made a lasting impression and influence on his work since then, as the composer admitted in 1979: "The composers I studied with Boulanger are the people I still think about most -- [J.S.] Bach and [W.A.] Mozart."

Glass later stated in his autobiography *Music by Philip Glass* (1987) that the new music performed at Pierre Boulez's *Domaine Musical* concerts in Paris lacked any excitement for him (with the notable exceptions of music by John Cage and Morton Feldman), but he was deeply impressed by new films and theatre performances. He encountered revolutionary films of the French New Wave, such as those of Jean-Luc Godard and François Truffaut, which ignored the rules set by an older generation of artists.

Glass made friends with American visual artists, including the sculptor Richard Serra and his wife Nancy Graves, and actors and directors, particularly JoAnne Akalaitis, Ruth Maleczech, David Warrilow, and Lee Breuer. Glass and Akalaitis attended performances by theatre groups (including Jean-Louis Barrault's Odéon theatre, The Living Theatre, and the Berliner Ensemble) beginning in 1964, and married the next year.

1965 also saw a collaboration with Breuer in a staging of Samuel Beckett's *Comédie* (Play, 1963). The music, for two soprano saxophones, was directly influenced by the drama's open-ended, repetitive, and almost musical structure, and was the first one of a series of four early Glass pieces in a minimalist, yet still dissonant, idiom.

In parallel with his early excursions in experimental theatre, Glass worked in winter 1965 and spring 1966 as a music director and composer on a film score (*Chappaqua*, Conrad Rooks, 1966) with Ravi Shankar and Alla Rakha, which added another important influence on Glass's musical thinking. His distinctive style arose from his work with Shankar and Rakha and their perception of rhythm in Indian music as being entirely additive. He renounced all his compositions in a moderately modern style resembling Milhaud's, Aaron Copland's, and Samuel Barber's, and began writing pieces based on repetitive structures of Indian music and a sense of time influenced by Beckett: a piece for two actresses and chamber ensemble, a work for chamber ensemble and his String Quartet No. 1 (1966).

At this time, Glass also served as music director for a Breuer production of Brecht's *Mother Courage and Her Children*, featuring a score by Paul Dessau.

Glass then left for northern India, where he came in contact with Tibetan refugees and began to gravitate towards Buddhism.

Shortly after arriving in New York City in March 1967, the composer attended a performance of works by Steve Reich (including the ground-breaking minimalist piece *Piano Phase*), which left a deep impression on him; he simplified his style and turned to a radical "consonant vocabulary."

Finding little sympathy from traditional performers and performance spaces, Glass eventually formed an ensemble with fellow ex-students Steve Reich, Jon Gibson, and others and began performing mainly in art galleries and studio lofts of SoHo.

Between the summer of 1967 and the end of 1968, Glass composed nine works, including *Strung Out* (for amplified solo violin, composed in summer of 1967), *Gradus* (for solo saxophone, 1968), *Music in the Shape of a Square* (for two flutes, composed in May 1968, an homage to Erik Satie), *How Now* (for solo piano, 1968), and *1+1* (for amplified tabletop, November 1968) which were "clearly designed to experiment more fully with his new-found minimalist approach," as the musicologist Keith Potter pointed out.

The first concert of Philip Glass's new music was at Jonas Mekas's *Film-Makers Cinemathèque* (Anthology Film Archives) in September 1968. This concert included the first work of this series with *Strung Out* (performed by the violinist Pixley-Rothschild) and *Music in the Shape of a Square* (performed by Glass and Gibson). The musical scores were tacked on the wall, and the performers had to move while playing. Glass's new works met with a very enthusiastic response by the open-minded audience that consisted mainly of visual and performance artists who were highly sympathetic to Glass's reductive approach.

During this time he made friends with other New-York-based artists such as Sol LeWitt, Nancy Graves, Michael Snow, Bruce Nauman, Laurie Anderson, and Chuck Close, who created a now famous portrait of Glass.

Glass's first child Juliet was born at this time.

With *1+1* and *Two Pages* (composed in February 1969) Glass turned to a more "rigorous approach," with his "most basic minimalist technique, additive process," pieces which were followed in the same year by *Music in Contrary Motion* and *Music in Fifths* (a kind of homage to his composition teacher Nadia Boulanger, who pointed out "hidden fifths" in his works but regarded them as cardinal sins).

Eventually Glass's music grew less austere, becoming more complex and dramatic, with pieces such as *Music in Similar Motion* (1969) and *Music with Changing Parts* (1970). These pieces were performed by The Philip Glass Ensemble in the Whitney Museum of American Art in 1969 and in the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in 1970, often encountering hostile reaction from critics, but Glass's music also met with enthusiasm from younger artists such as Brian Eno and David Bowie (at the Royal College of Art).

Eno described this encounter with Glass's music as his "most extraordinary musical experiences of [his] life," as "viscous bath of pure, thick energy," concluding, "this was actually the most detailed music I'd ever heard. It was all intricacy exotic harmonics."

In 1970, Glass returned to the theatre with composing music for the theatre group Mabou Mines (Glass's old dramatic cronies from his Paris days), resulting in his first minimalist pieces employing voices: *Red Horse Animation* and *Music for Voices* (both 1970, and premiered at the Paula Cooper Gallery).

Also in that year, Glass and Klaus Kertess (owner of the Bykert Gallery) formed a record label named Chatham Square Productions (named after the location of the studio of a Philip Glass Ensemble member Dick Landry). Glass's second child, Zachary, was born in 1971.

Richard Serra provided Glass with gallery contacts, while both collaborated on various sculptures, films and installations; from 1971 to 1974, he became Serra's regular studio assistant.

After certain differences of opinion with Steve Reich in 1971, Glass formed the Philip Glass Ensemble an amplified ensemble including keyboards, wind instruments (saxophones, flutes), and soprano voices. The group Steve Reich and Musicians dates from this same period.

Glass's music for his ensemble culminated in the four-hour-long *Music in Twelve Parts* (1971–1974), which began as a single piece with twelve instrumental parts but developed into a cycle that summed up Glass's musical achievement since 1967, and even transcended it -- the last part features a twelve-tone theme, sung by the soprano voice of the ensemble. "I had broken the rules of modernism and so I thought it was time to break some of my own rules", according to Glass.

Though he finds the term minimalist inaccurate to describe his later work, Glass does accept this term for pieces up to and including *Music in 12 Parts*, excepting this last part which "was the end of minimalism" for Glass. As he pointed out: "I had worked for eight or nine years inventing a system, and now I'd written through it and come out the other end."

The composer met Tenzin Gyatso, the 14th Dalai Lama, in 1972, and has been a strong supporter of Tibetan causes ever since.

Aside from composing in the Western classical tradition, Glass's music has ties to rock, ambient music, electronic music, and world music. Early admirers of his minimalism include musicians Brian Eno and David Bowie, who attended an early performance of the Philip Glass Ensemble in 1973.

Apart from his music career, Glass had a moving company with his cousin, the sculptor Jene Highstein, and worked as a plumber and cab driver -- from 1973 to 1978.

Musical innovations continued with a series of instrumental works, *Another Look at Harmony* (1975–1977), constituting a new start, hence the programmatic title. "What I was looking for was a way of combining harmonic progression with the rhythmic structure I had been developing, to produce a new overall structure. . . . I'd taken everything out with my early works and it was now time to decide just what I wanted to put in -- a process that would occupy me for several years to come."

Parts 1 and 2 of *Another Look at Harmony* were included in a collaboration with Robert Wilson, a piece of musical theater that was later designated by Glass as the first opera in what turned out to be his portrait-opera trilogy: *Einstein on the Beach*. Composed in spring to fall of 1975 in close collaboration with Wilson, Glass's first large-scale music drama was premiered in summer 1976 at the Festival d'Avignon, and in November of the same year to a mixed and partly enthusiastic reaction from the audience at the Metropolitan Opera in New York. Scored for the Philip Glass Ensemble, solo violin, chorus; and featuring actors reciting texts by Christopher Knowles, Lucinda Childs and Samuel M. Johnson -- Glass and Wilson's essentially plotless opera was conceived as a "metaphorical look at Albert Einstein: scientist, humanist, amateur musician -- and the man whose theories . . . led to the splitting of the atom," evoking nuclear holocaust in the climactic scene, as critic Tim Page pointed out.

As *Another Look at Harmony*, Einstein added a new functional harmony that set it apart from the early conceptual works."

Composer-critic Tom Johnson came to the same conclusion, comparing the Solo Violin music to Johann Sebastian Bach's, and the "organ figures . . . to those Alberti basses Mozart loved so much." The piece was praised by the Washington Post as "one of the seminal artworks of the century."

Einstein on the Beach was followed by further music for projects by the theatre group Mabou Mines such as *Dressed like an Egg*, particularly for works of Samuel Beckett, including *The Lost Ones* and *Cascando* (all from 1975).

In 1977, Glass wrote two multi-movement instrumental works for the Philip Glass Ensemble which originated as music for film and TV: *North Star* (for the documentary *Mark di Suvero, Sculptor* by Francois de Menil and Barbara Rose) and *Geometry of Circles* (1977) (four short cues for Jim Henson's *Sesame Street*).

By this time Glass's compositional influence had extended to musicians such as Mike Oldfield (who included parts from *North Star* in *Platinum*) and bands such as *Tangerine Dream* and *Talking Heads*.

Fourth Series (1977–79) includes music for chorus and organ (Part One, 1977), organ and piano (Part Two and Part Four, 1979), and music for a radio adaptation of Constance DeJong's novel *Modern Love* (Part Three, 1978). The keyboard sections were used and renamed in two dance productions by choreographer Lucinda Childs (who had already contributed to and performed in *Einstein on the Beach*): Part Two as *Dance* (a collaboration with visual artist Sol LeWitt, 1979), and Part Four as *Mad Rush*, and performed by Glass on several occasions such as the first public appearance of the 14th Dalai Lama in New York during the fall of 1981. The piece demonstrates Glass's turn to more traditional models: the composer added a conclusion to an open-structured piece which "can be interpreted as a sign that he [had] abandoned the radical nonnarrative, undramatic approaches of his early period," as the pianist Steffen Schleiermacher pointed out.

Philip Glass and his sound designer Kurt Munkacsi produced the American post-punk / new-wave band *Polyrock* from 1978 to the mid-1980's.

In the spring of 1978, Glass received a commission from the Netherlands Opera (as well as a Rockefeller Foundation grant), which "marked the end of his need to earn money from non-musical employment" and resulted in *Satyagraha* (1979, premiered in 1980 at Rotterdam), on the early life of Mahatma Gandhi in South Africa.

Glass worked in close collaboration with two "SoHo friends": librettist Constance DeJong and set designer Robert Israel. This piece also was in other ways a turning point for Glass, as it was his first one since 1963 scored for symphony orchestra, in addition to voices and chorus.

Music for a Mabou Mines production of Beckett's *Mercier and Camier* dates from the same year, as does his divorce from Akalaitis.

Shortly after completing the *Satyagraha* score in August 1979, Glass met the conductor Dennis Russell Davies, and together they started the projecting of yet another opera to be premiered at the Stuttgart State Opera.

While planning a third part of his evolving *Portrait Trilogy*, Glass turned to smaller music theatre projects such as the non-narrative *Madrigal Opera* (for six voices and violin and viola, 1980), and *The Photographer*, a biographic study on the photographer Eadweard Muybridge (1982). Glass also continued to write for the orchestra with his most famous film score to date, *Koyaanisqatsi* (Godfrey Reggio, 1981–1982). Some pieces which were not used in the film (such as *Facades*), in the end appeared on the album *Glassworks* (1982, CBS Records), which brought Glass's music to a continuing wider public.

The "Portrait Trilogy" was completed with *Akhnaten* (1982–1983, premiered in 1984), a vocal and orchestral composition sung in Akkadian, Biblical Hebrew, and Ancient Egyptian. In addition, this opera featured an actor reciting ancient Egyptian texts in the language of the audience. *Akhnaten* was commissioned by the Stuttgart Opera in a production designed by Achim Freyer. It premiered simultaneously at the Houston Opera in a production directed by David Freeman and designed by Peter Sellars. At the time of the commission, the Stuttgart Opera House was undergoing renovation, necessitating the use of a nearby playhouse with a smaller orchestra pit. Upon learning this, Glass and conductor Dennis Russell Davies visited the playhouse, placing music stands around the pit to determine how many players the pit could accommodate. Glass decided to eliminate the violins, which had the effect of "giving the orchestra a low, dark sound that came to characterize the piece and suited the subject very well."

As Glass remarked in 1992, Akhnaten is significant in his work since it represents a "first extension out of a triadic harmonic language," an experiment with the polytonality of his teachers Persichetti and Milhaud, a musical technique which Glass compares to "an optical illusion, such as in the paintings of Josef Albers."

Glass also again collaborated with Robert Wilson on another opera, the CIVIL warS (1983, premiered in 1984), which also functioned as the final part -- "the Rome section," of Wilson's epic work by the same name, originally planned for an "international arts festival that would accompany the Olympic Games in Los Angeles."

The premiere in Los Angeles never materialized and the opera was in the end premiered at the Opera of Rome. Glass's and Wilson's opera includes musical settings of Latin texts by the 1st-century-Roman playwright Seneca and allusions to the music of Giuseppe Verdi and from the American Civil War, featuring the 19th century figures Giuseppe Garibaldi and Robert E. Lee.

In the mid-1980's Glass produced "works in different media at an extraordinarily rapid pace."

Projects from this period include music for dance (Dance Pieces, Jerome Robbins, 1983, and In the Upper Room, Twyla Tharp, 1986), and music for theatre productions of Beckett's Endgame (1984) and Company (1983). Beckett vehemently disapproved of the production of the former at the American Repertory Theater (Cambridge, Massachusetts), which featured Joanne Akalaitis's direction and Glass's Prelude for timpani and double bass, but in the end, though, he authorized the music for the latter, as four short, intimate pieces for string quartet that were played in the intervals of the dramatization. This composition was initially regarded by the composer as a piece of Gebrauchsmusik (music for use) – "like salt and pepper (...) just something for the table."

Eventually Company was published as Glass's String Quartet No.2 and in a version for string orchestra, being performed by ensembles ranging from student orchestras to the Kronos Quartet and the Kremerata Baltica.

This interest in writing for the string quartet and the string orchestra led to a chamber and orchestral film score for Mishima: A Life in Four Chapters (Paul Schrader, 1984–85), which Glass recently described as another "musical turning point" that developed his "technique of film scoring in a very special way."

Glass also dedicated himself to vocal works with two sets of songs, Three Songs for chorus (1984, settings of poems by Leonard Cohen, Octavio Paz and Raymond Levesque), and a song cycle initiated by CBS Masterworks Records: Songs from Liquid Days (1985), with texts by songwriters such as David Byrne, Paul Simon, in which the Kronos Quartet is featured (as it is in Mishima) in a prominent role.

Glass also continued his series of operas with adaptations from literary texts such as The Juniper Tree (an opera collaboration with composer Robert Moran, 1984) and Doris Lessing's The Making Of The Representative For Planet 8 (1985–86, and performed by the Houston Grand Opera and English National Opera in 1988).

A second cinematic collaboration with Godfrey Reggio Powaqqatsi (1986) and a setting of Edgar Allan Poe's The Fall of the House of Usher (1987) also date from this period.

Glass describes himself as "a Jewish-Taoist-Hindu-Toltec-Buddhist" and he is a supporter of the Tibetan cause. In 1987, he co-founded the Tibet House with Columbia University professor Robert Thurman and the actor Richard Gere. The composer is a vegetarian.

Compositions such as Company, Facades, and String Quartet No.3 (the last two extracted from the scores to Koyaanisqatsi and Mishima) gave way to a series of accessible works for string quartet and symphony orchestra, returning to the structural roots of his student days. In taking this direction, Glass's chamber and orchestral works have been written in a more traditional, lyrical style, wherein the composer continues to incorporate chaconnes and passacaglias, beginning with a three-movement Violin Concerto (1987). This work was commissioned by the American Composers Orchestra and written for and in close collaboration with the violinist Paul Zukofsky and the conductor Dennis Russell Davies, who since then has encouraged the composer to write numerous orchestral pieces. The Concerto is dedicated to the memory of Glass's father: "His favorite form was the violin concerto, and so I grew up listening to the Mendelssohn, the Paganini, the Brahms concertos. . . . So when I decided to write a violin concerto, I wanted to write one that my father would have liked."

Among its multiple recordings, in 1992, the Concerto was performed and recorded by Gidon Kremer and the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra. This turn to orchestral music was continued with a symphonic Trilogy of "portraits of nature," commissioned by the Cleveland Orchestra, the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra, and the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra: The Light (1987), The Canyon (1988), and Itaipu (1989).

While composing for symphonic ensembles, Glass also composed again music for piano, the cycle of five movements, titled Metamorphosis (adapted from music for a theatrical adaptation of the Franz Kafka and for the Errol Morris film The Thin Blue Line, 1988). In the same year Glass met the poet Allen Ginsberg by chance in a book store in the East Village of New York City, and they immediately "decided on the spot to do something together, reached for one of Allen's books and chose Wichita Vortex Sutra, a piece for reciter and piano which in turn developed into a music theatre piece for singers and ensemble, Hydrogen Jukebox (1990).

Glass became a grandfather during this time with the birth of Zuri (1989), is the child of Zachary.

Glass also returned to chamber music, composing two String Quartets (No.4 and No.5, for the Kronos Quartet, 1989 and 1991), and chamber works which originated as incidental music for plays, such as Music from "The Screens" (1989/1990). This work originated in one of many theater music collaborations with Akalaitis, who originally asked the Gambian musician Foday Musa Suso "to do the score (for the Jean Genet play) in collaboration with a western composer," who was easily found in Philip Glass, who had already collaborated with Suso in Powaqqatsi). Music from "The Screens" is on occasion, a touring piece for Glass and Suso, and individual pieces found its way to the repertoire of Glass and the cellist Wendy Sutter. Another collaboration was a collaborative recording project with Ravi Shankar, initiated by Peter Baumann (a member of the band Tangerine Dream), which resulted in the album Passages (1990).

Glass's projects of the early 90's also included two opera commissions on the lives of two explorers: Christopher Columbus (The Voyage, 1990], commissioned by the Metropolitan Opera, with a libretto by David Henry Hwang); and Vasco da Gama (White Raven, 1991, a collaboration Robert Wilson and composed for the opening of the Expo '98). Particularly in the former, Glass "explore[d] new territory", with its "newly arching lyricism", "Sibelian starkness and sweep", and "dark, brooding tone . . . a reflection of its increasingly chromatic (and dissonant) palette," as one critic put it.

Another opera "homage" triptych (1991–1996) begun during this period was based on the prose and cinematic work of Jean Cocteau: Orphée (1949), La Belle et la Bête (1946), and the novel Les Enfants Terribles (1929, later made into a film by Cocteau and Jean-Pierre Melville, 1950). Relatedly, this series is also a musical homage to the work of a French group of composers associated with Cocteau, Les Six (and especially to his teacher Darius Milhaud), as well as to various 18th-century composers such as J.S. Bach and Gluck whose music featured as an essential part of the films by Cocteau.

The inspiration of the first part of the trilogy, Orphée (composed in 1991, and premiered in 1993 at the American Repertory Theatre) can be conceptually and musically traced to Gluck's opera Orfeo ed Euridice (Orphée et Euridyce, 1762/1774), which had a prominent part in Cocteau's film.

One theme of the opera, the death of Eurydice, has some similarity to the composer's personal life: the opera was composed after the unexpected death in 1991 of Glass's third wife, artist Candy Jernigan, of liver cancer: "One can only suspect that Orpheus's grief must have resembled the composer's own," as K. Robert Schwartz suggested.

The opera's "transparency of texture, a subtlety of instrumental color, . . . a newly expressive and unfettered vocal writing" was praised, and The Guardian's critic remarked "Glass has a real affinity for the French text and sets the words eloquently, underpinning them with delicately patterned instrumental textures."

After these operas, Glass began working on symphonic cycle, commissioned by the conductor Dennis Russell Davies, who told Glass at the time: "I'm not going to let you . . . be one of those opera composers who never write a symphony."

Glass responded with a three-movement "Low" Symphony, 1992, the First in an ongoing series of symphonies, as combination of the composer's own musical material with themes featured in prominent tracks of the David Bowie/Brian Eno album Low (1977):

With the Concerto Grosso (1992, also commissioned by Davies), a more transparent, refined, and intimate chamber-orchestral style parallels the excursions of Glass's large-scale symphonic pieces. Seemingly disconnected with this was the score to the violent film Candyman (Bernard Rose, 1992)

In 1993, Glass formed another record label, Point Music, and followed up with Symphony No. 2 (1994), which the composer described as a study in polytonality, referencing music of Arthur Honegger, Darius Milhaud, and Heitor Villa-Lobos.

For the second "Cocteau" opera, La Belle et la Bête (1994, scored for either the Philip Glass Ensemble or a more conventional chamber orchestra), Glass replaced the soundtrack (including Georges Auric's film music) of the film with "a new fully operatic score and synchronize[d] it with the film."

Theatre music to Robert Wilson's Persephone, commissioned by the Relache Ensemble, also dates from this period.

Echorus (for two violins and string orchestra, written for Edna Mitchell and Yehudi Menuhin), Symphony No. 3, and Concerto for Saxophone Quartet and Orchestra (the latter two as more Davies commissions) continued the chamber music thread in 1995 .

Glass treats a 19-piece string orchestra in the Third as an extended chamber ensemble, and, in its third of four movements, the composer is again chaconish; one commentator characterized the symphony as one of its creator's "most tautly unified works."

By 1995, Glass's collaborations with popular musicians had become manifold, including work with Suzanne Vega and Aphex Twin (yielding an orchestration of Ict Hedral, on the Donkey Rhubarb EP). His film scores from this time include Reggio's short independent Evidence, the thriller sequel Candyman: Farewell to the Flesh (Bill Condon, and an adaptation of Joseph Conrad's The Secret Agent (1996).

The Third Symphony was closely followed by a Fourth, subtitled Heroes (1996), commissioned the American Composers Orchestra. Its six movements are again inspired by themes of David Bowie and Brian Eno (from their album Heroes, 1977), as hybrid work in two versions, for the concert and dance presentations (the second, shorter version choreographed by Twyla Tharp).

The final part of the "Cocteau" triptych returned to tradition with the "dance opera" *Les Enfants Terribles* (1996), for voices, three pianos, and dancers, with choreography by Susan Marshall. The scoring of the opera evokes Bach's Concerto for Four Harpsichords, but in another way also "the snow, which falls relentlessly throughout the opera . . . bear[s] witness to the unfolding events. Here time stands still. There is only music, and the movement of children through space."

Still another commission by Davies was a second series for piano, the *Etudes for Piano* (dedicated to the commissioner as well as Freyer) -- the complete first set of ten now exclusively performed by Glass himself. Most of the *Etudes* are composed in the post-minimalist and increasingly lyrical style: "Within the framework of a concise form, Glass explores possible sonorities ranging from typically Baroque passagework to Romantically tinged moods."

Some of the pieces also appeared previously in different versions such as *Persephone* (1994) and *Echorus* (a version of *Etude No. 2* scored for two violins and string orchestra, written for Edna Mitchell and Yehudi Menuhin in 1995).

Besides writing for the concert hall, Glass continued his ongoing operatic series with adaptations from literary texts: *The Marriages of Zones 3, 4 and 5* (1997, story-libretto by Doris Lessing). That year also saw the release of *Point Music's Music for Airports*, a live, instrumental version of Eno's work, as re-imagined by Bang on a Can All-Stars.

In the late 1990's, Glass's lyrical and romantic styles peaked with many projects, including music to Martin Scorsese's *Kundun* (1997), *Songs of Milarepa* (1997), another collaboration with Wilson in *Monsters of Grace* (1998).

He even made a cameo appearance in Peter Weir's *The Truman Show* (1998), which uses music from Powaqqatsi, *Anima Mundi*, and *Mishima*, as well as three new tracks. In 1999, he finished a new soundtrack for the 1931 film *Dracula*.

The thematically meditative *Symphony No.5 "Choral"* dates from that same year and *In the Penal Colony* (after the novella by Franz Kafka) from the next.

In the early 2000's, Glass started a series of five concerti with *The Tirol Concerto for Piano and Orchestra* (2000, premiered by Davies as conductor and soloist) and the *Concerto Fantasy for Two Timpanists and Orchestra* (2000, for the timpanist Jonathan Haas). The *Concerto for Cello and Orchestra* (2001) had its premiere performance in Beijing, featuring cellist Julian Lloyd Webber, and was composed in celebration of the cellist's fiftieth birthday.

The operatic *Symphony No.6 "Plutonian Ode"* (2001) for soprano and orchestra was commissioned by The Brucknerhaus Linz and Carnegie Hall in celebration of Glass's 65th birthday, and originated as another collaboration with Ginsberg, based on the poet's eponymous poem.

Other work of this time includes a biographic opera on the life of astronomer Galileo Galilei (2001), the scores to *Godfrey*

Reggio's *Naqoyqatsi* and Stephen Daldry's *The Hours* (both from 2002), and the concise and rigorously neo-baroque *Concerto for Harpsichord and Orchestra* (2002, demonstrating in its transparent, chamber orchestral textures Glass's classical technique, evocative in the "improvisatory chords" of its beginning a toccata of Froberger or Frescobaldi, and 18th century music).

In 2002, Glass and his producer Kurt Munkacsi and artist Don Christensen founded the Orange Mountain Music company, dedicated to "establishing the recording legacy of Philip Glass" and, to date, have released 60 albums of Glass's music, ultimately including the chamber opera *The Sound of a Voice* (2003, with David Henry Hwang, with pipa virtuoso Wu Man at its premiere)

The Fog of War (Errol Morris, 2003) and *Taking Lives* (D. J. Caruso, 2004), and the thriller *Secret Window* (David Koepp, 2004) are among his notable scores for films from the early 2000's, often utilizing older works as well as the newly composed. Glass's *Symphony No.7 "Toltec"* (2004) followed hard upon these endeavors.

Piano Concerto No. 2: After Lewis and Clark (2004), composed for the pianist Paul Barnes, celebrates the pioneers' trek across North America, and the second movement features a duet for piano and Native American flute.

Since 2005, Glass has been romantically involved with cellist Wendy Sutter. His third and fourth children, Marlowe and Cameron, are Glass's offspring with his fourth wife, Holly Critchlow, from whom Glass is separated.

Waiting for the Barbarians (from J.M. Coetzee's eponymous novel) with libretto by Christopher Hampton, is Glass's first grand opera in eight years had its premiere performance in September, 2005. Davies characterized Glass's work as using "very simple means, and the orchestration is very clear and very traditional; it's almost classical in sound."

Two months after the premiere of this opera, in November 2005, Glass's *Symphony No. 8*, commissioned by the Bruckner Orchester Linz, was premiered at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. After three symphonies for voices and orchestra, this piece was a return to purely orchestral composition, and like previous works written for Davies, it features extended solo writing. Critic Allan Kozinn described the symphony's chromaticism as more extreme, more fluid, and its themes and textures as continually changing, morphing without repetition, and praised the symphony's "unpredictable orchestration" (Kozinn especially pointed out the "beautiful flute and harp variation in the melancholy second movement"). Alex Ross, remarked that "against all odds, this work succeeds in adding something certifiably new to the overstuffed annals of the classical symphony. . . . The musical material is cut from familiar fabric, but it's striking that the composer forgoes the expected bustling conclusion and instead delves into a mood of deepening twilight and unending night."

Glass finally returned the favor to his famous portraitist in 2005, with *A Musical Portrait of Chuck Close* for piano, dedicated to the artist.

Also at this time, he composed the score for the film *Neverwas*, an independent production starring Aaron Eckhart and Ian McKellen, and, in 2006, the scores for Neil Burger's *The Illusionist* and Richard Eyre's *Notes on a Scandal*, garnering his third Academy Award nomination for the latter.

The Passion of Ramakrishna (2006), was composed for the Orange County's Pacific Symphony Orchestra, the Pacific Chorale, and conductor Carl St. Clair. This 45-minute choral work, based on the writings of Indian spiritual leader, is "genuinely inspired and revived the composer out of his old formulas to write something fresh," as one critic remarked, whereas another noted that "except for the glorious Handelian ending . . . the "composer's style ideally fits the devotional text".

In 2007, Glass also worked alongside Leonard Cohen on an adaptation of the poet's *Book of Longing*. The work, which premiered in June, 2007, in Toronto, Canada, is a piece for seven instruments and a vocal quartet, and contains recorded spoken word performances by Cohen and imagery from his collection.

Song and Poems for Solo Cello (2007), composed for the cellist Wendy Sutter, was equally lauded by critics, described by Lisa Hirsch as "a major addition to the cello repertory" and "deeply Romantic in spirit, and at the same time deeply Baroque."

Anne Midgette noted that the suite "maintains an unusual degree of directness and warmth," and a kinship to work by Johann Sebastian Bach: "Digging into the lower registers of the instrument, it takes flight in handfuls of notes, now gentle, now impassioned, variously evoking the minor-mode keening of klezmer music and the interior meditations of Bach's cello suites."

Whereas Glass himself pointed out that "in many ways it owes more to Schubert than to Bach."

Appomattox, Glass's most recent opera, surrounding the events at the end of the American Civil War, and commissioned by the San Francisco Opera, was premiered on October 5, 2007. As *Waiting for the Barbarians* and *Symphony No. 8*, the piece was conducted by Glass's long time collaborator Davies, who acknowledged that "in his recent operas the bass line has taken on an increasing prominence . . . [and] use of melodic elements in the deep register, in the contrabass, the contrabassoon -- he's increasingly using these sounds and these textures can be derived from using these instruments in different combinations He's definitely developed more skill as an orchestrator, in his ability to conceive melodies and harmonic structures for specific instrumental groups. . . . [W]hat he gives them to play is very organic and idiomatic."

Apart from this large-scale opera, Glass added a work to his catalogue of theater music in 2007, continuing -- after a gap of twenty years -- to write music for the dramatic work of Samuel Beckett. He provided a "hypnotic" original score for a compilation Beckett's short plays *Act Without Words I*, *Act Without Words II*, *Rough for Theatre I*, and *Eh Joe*, directed by JoAnne Akalaitis and premiered in December 2007. Glass's work for this production was described by *The New York Times* as "icy, repetitive music that comes closest to piercing the heart."

Glass's newest film scores include Scott Hicks's *No Reservations* (Glass makes a brief appearance in the film sitting at an outdoor cafe), Woody Allen's *Cassandra's Dream* and Laurent Charbonnier's documentary *Les Animaux Amoureux* (*Animals in Love*, all from 2007), and *Mr. Nice* (Bernard Rose, 2009).

In 2008, Glass also added a new instrumental piece to the repertory of his own ensemble with *Los Paisajes del Rio* (premiered in September 2008).

He also continues to work on a series of chamber music pieces which started with *Songs and Poems: the Four Movements for Two Pianos* (2008, premiered by Davies and Maki Namekawa in July 2008), a *Sonata for Violin and Piano* composed in "the Brahms tradition" (completed in 2008, premiered by violinist Maria Bachman and pianist Jon Klibonoff in February 2009), a *String Sextet* (an adaptation of the *Symphony No.3* of 1995, first performed in 2009), and a projected second *Cello Suite* for Wendy Sutter.

Other recent works are again for the theatre: a score for Euripides's *The Bacchae* (2009, directed by JoAnne Akalaitis), and another operatic biography of a scientist/explorer and Glass's first opera in German, *Kepler* premiered by the Bruckner Orchester Linz and Davies in September 2009, and with a libretto by Martina Winkel.

Glass now returns to the concerto medium with two works: a *Violin Concerto No.2* in four movements for violinist Robert McDuffie, titled "The American Four Seasons" (2009) will be premiered in December 2009 by the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, and subsequently performed by the London Philharmonic Orchestra in April 2010.

Philip Glass's *Double Concerto for Violin, Cello, and Orchestra* (2010) was composed for soloists Maria Bachmann and Wendy Sutter and also for a ballet for the Nederlands Dans Theater.

The composer has given multiple interviews commenting on prospective 9th and 10th Symphonies which have been commissioned, but no date has been given for possible performance.

He is the first cousin once removed of Ira Glass, host of the nationally syndicated radio show *This American Life*. Glass lives in New York and in Nova Scotia.

Bay-Area Wrap-Up and View

MARK ALBURGER

In interviewing Meredith Monk a while back, I asked her, "So what are you listening to?" Her response was, "Oh Mark, it's enough just to keep up with my own music!" And I must confess, I've been a bit out of the general loop this year, too.

But when Commuter Times Editor Doreen Burgin asked for "a year-end piece on the whole classical music picture in the Bay Area -- both some good things that happened this year and future happenings. You could include your programs" I leapt at the chance.

So what's an only somewhat-in-touch composer-critic to do?

Google, of course. And draw on personal experience. So here goes.

Pianist Sarah Cahill started the year off right with A Sweeter Music, commissioning 18 composers to write pieces on the themes of peace and war, ranging from Jerome Kitzke's "There Is a Field, through Frederic Rzewski's Peace Dances, Mamoru Fujieda's The Olive Branch Speaks, Larry Polansky's B'midba, Peter Garland's After the Wars, and Preben Antonsen's Dar al-Harb: House of War, Terry Riley's Be Kind to One Another (Rag)," to offerings by Yoko Ono and the Residents.

February saw the San Francisco Composers Chamber Orchestra's Free For All (But For You, \$15) offered at Old First Church, featuring improvisational and semi-improvisational works including those of John Beeman, Michael Cooke, Philip Freihofner, Gary Friedman, David Graves and Clare Twohy (the collaborative Fireproof Winds), Loren Jones, Lisa Scola Prosek, David Sprung, Davide Verota, Erling Wold, and my Sex and the Orchestra.

By March, the season was in full bloom, when the Bay-Area premiere of Michael Daugherty's rompish Jackie O finally and wonderfully occurred, thanks to Paul Smith and College of Marin. The month also included the annual presentations of Charles Amirkhanian's Other Minds Festival, highlighted by the premiere of Ben Johnston's The Tavern, plus Chinary Ung's Spiral X: In Memoriam and works for cello octet by Mauricio Kagel and Arvo Pärt. Not to be outdone Michael Tilson Thomas cooked up an eclectic San Francisco Symphony mix (Gyorgy Ligeti's Requiem, late-renaissance/early-baroque music by Giovanni Gabrieli, Maurice Ravel's Piano Concerto in G, and Franz Liszt's Tasso), the Kronos Quartet presented a children's concert in Berkeley, Paul Drescher premiered his Schick Machine (for percussionist Steven Schick, directed by Rinde Eckert), and The Arditti String Quartet played at and with music by composers of Mills College, including Alvin Curran's VSTO, Chris Brown's Arcade, and Fred Frith's Allegory.

If April slowed down in my mind, it was probably due to the revival of Henry Purcell's Dioclesian and San Francisco premiere of my Diocletian, with Harriet March Page and Goat Hall / San Francisco Cabaret Opera, at Noh Space.

Come what May, and activity was definitely heating up again, with the organization's Fresh Voices IX: Festival of New Operas and Songs. Three Evenings and One Afternoon in Hell: Or Is It Heaven?, in a cornucopia of music drama by Greg Bartholomew, Paul Siskind, Stefan Weisman, Nolan Stolz, Robinson McClellan, Jean Ahn, Gary Friedman, Cynthia Weyuker, Sheli Nan, Veronika Krausas (her award-winning Mortal Thoughts of Lady Macbeth), David Heuser, Lan-chee Lam, Chris Pratorius, Edward Knight, and Warren Gooch, plus my Sex and Delilah.

June proved a month of revivals and premieres, with San Francisco Opera resuscitating George Gershwin's Porgy and Bess, and SF Cabaret Opera doing the same for Gian Carlo Menotti's The Old Maid and the Thief, plus bringing to life the dead of both Zachary Watkins's desolate No Exit and Peter Josheff's evocative Inferno. San Francisco Composers Chamber Orchestra presented relatedly Restless Dreams, including the premieres works by Cooke, Alan Crossman (a wild concerto for instrument-inventor composer Tom Nunn's Sonoglyph), Jones, Scola Prosek, Verotta, and the Wold / fognozzle sound-and-light spectacular In the Stomach of Fleas and my King David Suite.

After spring and early summer madness, July sounded a sad note in the death Michael Steinberg, long-time music critic, program annotator, essayist, educator, who worked tirelessly in the Bay-Area music scene in the 1980's.

August is always a great time for musical vacations, and amongst the greatest continues to be Santa Cruz's Cabrillo Music Festival, which trumpeted the music of Osvaldo Golijov and Avner Dorman, and pounded away with the grace of percussionist Evelyn Glennie.

Before one could recover, the new season was upon us, as San Francisco Symphony and San Francisco Opera both provided their signature opening galas, the former with an eclectic all-most-all-20th-century program (Franz Liszt's Mephisto Waltz No. 1, Maurice Ravel's La Valse, Richard Rodgers's Carousel Waltz, and Sergei Prokofiev's Piano Concerto No. 3), and the latter with a very traditional Giuseppe Verdi Il Trovatore.

The Opera continued in October with a stunning revival of Richard Strauss's *Salome* at the War Memorial, which led to another Goat Hall Productions premiere, that of British-Netherlandish composer Patrick Dailly's *Solidarity* (with singing versions of Lech Walles, Pope John-Paul II, and Ronald Reagan live and onstage) at Flux 53 Theatre in Oakland. The Julliard String Quartet was also showcased, in Mario Davidovsky's *Quartet No. 5*, at San Francisco's Herbst Theatre.

The SF Chamber Orchestra refused to go quietly into that good night of post-Halloween November by conjuring up a Haunted House Science Fiction Quiz Show, cooing and howling in spells by Cooke, Freihofner, Scola Prosek, Gerhard Samuel (...night and trees), Wold, and present company's *Elijah Ghost*, at Oakland's Chapel of the Chimes. Other ghosts reigned with the Shanghai Orchestra at Berkeley's Zellerbach Hall, with Qigang Chen's *Iris dévoilé*.

Finally, December's looking to go out with requisite bangs with Pacific Mozart Ensemble's performance of Pulitzer-Prize-Winning David Lang's *The Little Match Girl Passion*, and Pianist Marino Formenti's resounding performance of Olivier

Messiaen's massive, two-hour-long *Vingt Regards sur l'Enfant-Jésus* (20 Looks of the Infant Jesus).

On sober notes, in the entire 2008-2009 performance season, The San Francisco Symphony -- the Bay Area's flagship instrumental ensemble -- played only 10 works by American composers, by only six composers (Leonard Bernstein's five featured works equaled the total by others), four of whom are living, two of whom who live in the Bay Area, one of whom is not the conductor of the ensemble, none of whom is not a graduate student. San Francisco Opera -- ditto for Bay-Area music drama -- presented not a single American composer, let alone one living or local.

What wonders will the second decade of the 21st Century bring? Surely much more than *Sex and the Bible*, which premieres in March. But suffice it to say that there will be undoubtedly many musically earthy and spiritual joys to come!



In Glass's Orbit

MICHAEL MCDONAGH

Philip Glass always does the unexpected. Or, as he said to me when we were talking on the phone about his subsequently Oscar-nominated score for Errol Morris's 2003 *The Fog of War*, "I'm a bad person to interview because I never stay on the subject." Well, yes and no. Yes, because Glass's focus on the work in front of him is unflinching, and no, because his instincts always lead him to surprising solutions. His latest two-act 155-minute intermissionless opera *Kepler* (2009) which American conductor Dennis Russell Davies and his Bruckner Orchester Linz, premiered at the Linz Opera September 20, 2009, as part of that city's celebrations as this year's Cultural Capital of Europe.

Kepler lived in Linz, Mozart's *Symphony No. 36* was dedicated to it, Bruckner was choir director there, and two of the Nazis' death camps -- Mauthausen and Gusen, whose specialty was getting rid of the intelligentsia -- were scant kilometres from its city limits. But then darkness is never far from light.

And darkness as distinct, or in contrast/opposition to light, is the motor that drives Glass's *Kepler*, but not in a Manichean way. Glass is far too subtle to put his cards on one table. Instead, being a practical practicing Buddhist, he seems to have chosen the unglamorous "Middle Way" which means seeing "things as they are" and in *Kepler's* case this is -- war, strife, and anyone who dares question him. The mathematician-teacher-astronomer-astrologer-provocateur, who lived from 1571 to 1630 -- seems to have been at the epicenter of cultural ferment, and *The Thirty Years War* (1618-1648), which began more-or-less as a conflict between Catholics and Protestants, and ended up devastating much of Europe, with a death toll as high as 11.5 million people (a little less than half of the top figure for the 1914-1918 War). Glass dramatizes these stresses in direct and indirect ways. And his in German and Latin libretto -- assembled by Austrian artist Martina Winkel, from *Kepler's* theoretical writings on the laws of planetary motion and other major discoveries, his enemies list, passages from the Lutheran Bible, and poems by Andreas Gryphius (1616-1664) -- works as reportage and evocation.

The oratorio-like piece for the 79-member Orchester is partially staged here with effective lighting and Karel van Laere's costumes. The superbly gifted Bass-baritone Martin Achrainner (*Kepler*, the only specified character), Sadie Rosales (Soprano 1, substituting for Cassandra McConnell), Cheryl Lichter (Soprano 2), Katherina Hebelkova (Mezzo), Pedro Vasquez Diaz (Tenor), Seho Chang (Baritone), and Florian Spiess (Bass) functioned as aspects of *Kepler's* often beleaguered psyche, and the 40-member Linz chorus, moved incrementally through the work.

The first 20-or-so minutes, after a wonderfully transparent orchestral prologue with lovely chromatic figures for the strings, was pretty hard going. But then things began to

progress by leaps and bounds. *Kepler* outlined his theories and his conflicts. He feels that heaven's not a place inhabited by "divine beings" but a "clockwork," which suits Glass' formal processes to a tee.

The chorus, operating as both character and commentator, gave *Kepler* heft, and vivid and enormously varied contrasts. Glass has always written superbly for massed voices. The choruses in *Satyagraha* (1979) are contemporary watersheds, and those here were both affecting and powerful, especially *Vanitas! Vanitas!*, which the full vocal ensemble sang on the lip of the stage facing the audience, with the onstage orchestra seated behind.

Those who think Glass hasn't developed from his classic 1965-1974 period -- when he invented an entirely new, from-the-ground-up language for himself -- have obviously not been listening. And the range, variety, and depth of the music here surprised the ear, delighted the mind, and touched the heart. The composer used Latin-American rhythms in several sections (particularly the Caribbean *montuno*) which provided tension and drama in equal measure. His command of the orchestra bore the sure mark of a master.

The sheer variety of the textures, from lean to fat, are never clotted -- even in a stunning stretch depicting the devastation both physical and psychic of *The Thirty Years War*, which, as the Synopsis has it "becomes a threat to all mankind" -- and couldn't be more horrific and poignant. The orchestration was apt, colorful, and expressive throughout, with Glass keeping the six percussionists and sole pianist on their toes. Languid meditative stretches, particularly those describing *Kepler's* love for the starry heavens, alternated with ones where Glass used opposing contrapuntal tactics (in similar and contrary motion), complex/stacked-up rhythms, and polyharmonies. There were tritones, anchors in minor thirds, and an abundance of perfect fourths and fifths in the vocal and bass lines, as in the opening section of Act 2.

One could argue till kingdom come as to whether *Kepler* is a "real opera" (*Tosca* it ain't), or an opera-oratorio like Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex* (1927). But who cares when you have a work of such thrilling depth and power? It's well-known that Glass has been attracted to scientists, as in *Einstein on the Beach* (1976), *Galileo Galilei* (2001), and his evocations Stephen Hawking in both the Prologue of *The Voyage* (1991), the score for Morris's documentary *Hawking's A Brief History of Time* (1992).

But *Kepler* is in large part an epic meditation on death, as in the eponymously titled ninth movement of Glass's 12-movement *Symphony No. 5* (1999). Or, as the Latin chant John Barry used in *The Lion in Winter* (1968) puts it *Media vita in morte sumus*: "in the midst of life we are in death." And you can't get more serious and essential than that.

Chronicle

November 18

Philip Glass's *Kepler*. Brooklyn Academy of Music, New York, NY. "In *Galileo Galilei*, his 18th opera, from 2001, he used scenes from the life of the astronomer and mathematician to examine the fraught relationship between science and religion. . . . [The E]ssence [of Glass's 23rd opera, *Kepler*,] is strikingly familiar: he uses scenes from the life of another astronomer and mathematician -- a contemporary of Galileo, each having straddled the 16th and 17th centuries -- to examine again the relationship between science and religion. The issues are less fraught this time, but still weighty and tangled. In both works the scientists expound on the theories that made them famous, and that can make for some dry moments in the opera house. When, for example, *Kepler* asks, 'Is it cold that gives snow its starry shape?' and then ponders the question from several angles, or when he explains the scientific method ('First, we pose our hypothesis') and his theories of how the planets' orbits are shaped, chills do not run up your spine. Galileo, at least, had its protagonist's persecution by the church to deal with, and Mr. Glass wisely included an Inquisition scene. The most dramatic moment in *Kepler*, which has a libretto by Martina Winkel drawn largely from *Kepler's* writings, is his accounting of his own character flaws, and how he made enemies of most of his colleagues. Not that we meet those colleagues, or see their animosity in action. *Kepler* is the only named character; the six other soloists are Soprano 1, Soprano 2 and so on down the vocal ranges, and although several have brief moments in the spotlight, they mostly work as a chamber choir. The performance was described as a concert staging. The soloists and the larger Choir of the Upper Austrian State Theater, from Linz, marched on and off the stage regularly, reconvening either behind the Bruckner Orchestra Linz or in front of it. As *Kepler*, Martin Achraimer, wore a patchwork leather coat and walked around the stage looking thoughtful, troubled or dour. Maybe the biggest problem with *Kepler* is that it is called an opera. As an opera, it is exceedingly nondramatic. But as an oratorio, it works brilliantly. Oratorios allow for the presentation of ideas without the expectation of action. And the ideas here -- not least, *Kepler's* almost continuous struggle to show that science and religion are separate, noncompeting realms, and that his discoveries are not a disavowal of God -- are worth exploring. They are even timely, given the increasingly corrosive debates about evolution and creationism. At one point *Kepler* argues that the church should treat literalist readings of the biblical creation story as a form of heretical abuse. Mr. Glass's score includes many of his trademark moves: the repeating chords on a foursquare beat, as well as with syncopations of various kinds, usually in minor keys; the scale figures and arpeggios (now increasingly angular); the swirling string and flute effects; and the use of a minor third as an engine of sorts. There is no chance you'll be wondering who the composer is. But *Kepler* offers quite a few novel touches as well, including a colorful use of pitched percussion instruments and hollow blocks, often paired with rumbling bass lines. Mr. Glass's vocal writing is more varied than it once was: Mr. Achraimer's first aria takes him nearly to

the high and low extremes of his range, a test he handled beautifully, and the choral writing includes several vigorous pieces, including a few biblical settings. Dennis Russell Davies, unquestionably Mr. Glass's most eloquent interpreter these many years, kept the musical focus on the work's novel touches, and on the beauty and power of the vocal writing" [Allan Kozinn, *The New York Times*, 11/19/09].

November 19

Riccardo Muti conducts the New York Philharmonic in Edward Elgar's *In the South* (Alassio), Franz Liszt's *Les Préludes*, and Sergei Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet Suite*. Avery Fisher Hall, New York, NY. "As always, the musicians played extremely well for him. Mr. Muti is a major musician. Alan Gilbert was ultimately the choice for music director, and I can only hope that the players now feel as positive as I do about the current state and the future of their orchestra. I would go further and say that part of the excellence of the performances Mr. Muti drew from the musicians here stems from the good work Mr. Gilbert has done so far. The technical finesse that Lorin Maazel fostered is still there. But the players seem more relaxed and empowered. Though not as controlling as Mr. Maazel, Mr. Muti is a meticulous conductor who, at his best, brings an unusual blend of Italianate intensity and cool authority to his performances. That mix proved ideal in a rarity, Elgar's concert overture *In the South* (Alassio), composed in 1904, a work the Philharmonic had not played in 22 years. Elgar, the leading composer of Edwardian England, wrote this impassioned, restless piece while traveling in Italy. It opens with a bustling, almost giddy burst of swirling strings, exuberant brass and overlapping phrases. But as James M. Keller points out in his program notes, the inspiration for this extended passage was not the Italian countryside. The music comes from an earlier piece called *Dan Triumphant* (After a Fight), written in honor of a dog. Yet there are wistful flights that seem touched with Italian lyricism, nostalgic passages beautifully scored for veiled strings and whipped-up sections that never turn frenzied, at least in this commanding performance. At 20 minutes, the piece is a little long-winded. But I thought that only after the fact. During the performance Mr. Muti and the inspired players had me hooked. The concert began with a stirring, lushly colored account of Liszt's episodic symphonic poem *Les Préludes*. Mr. Muti captured the ruminative quality of the mysterious opening, so redolent of Wagner, and ended with a triumphant final section. The music making was joyous and vigorous without a trace of empty pomp. Mr. Muti drew brawny yet subtly detailed playing from the orchestra for the final work, selections from Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet* ballet score. The performance, while brilliant, was no revelation. It is not as if the Philharmonic under Mr. Muti were finally showing what it was capable of. Still, he will figure prominently in the concert schedule during the Gilbert years, as he should" [Anthony Tommasini, *The New York Times*, 11/20/09].

November 29

Death of John [Anthony] Storm Roberts (b. 2/24/36 London, UK), of complications from a blood clot, at 73. Kingston, NY. "[He was] an English-born writer, record producer and independent scholar whose work explored the rich, varied and often surprising ways in which the popular music of Africa and Latin America informed that of the United States Long before the term was bandied about, Mr. Roberts was listening to, seeking out and reporting on what is now called world music. He wrote several seminal books on the subject for a general readership, most notably *Black Music of Two Worlds* (Praeger, 1972) and *The Latin Tinge: The Impact of Latin American Music on the United States* (Oxford University, 1979). *Black Music of Two Worlds* examines the cross-pollination -- in both directions -- between Africa and the Americas, from the influence of African music on jazz, blues, salsa and samba to the popularity in Nigeria and Zaire of American artists like James Brown and Jimi Hendrix. In writing the book, Mr. Roberts sought to connect a diffuse web of existing studies by ethnomusicologists. The studies typically appraised local musical traditions while ignoring the reach of Africa as a whole. 'It was like a landscape with a large number of artesian wells, and nothing linking them,' he told *The New York Times* in 1992. 'And I conceived of *Black Music of Two Worlds* being more like canals joining.' In *The Latin Tinge*, Mr. Roberts trained his ear on the influence of musical forms like tango, rumba, mambo and salsa on a wide range of American pop styles, among them ragtime, Tin Pan Alley, rhythm and blues, jazz, country and rock. Reviewing the book in *The New York Times Book Review*, Robert Palmer called it a 'painstaking, pioneering' work, adding: 'The *Latin Tinge* is an important addition to the literature of American music. . . [Roberts's] father, an accountant who often traveled abroad on business, brought him records that were then scarcely available in England: jazz and blues from the United States, Brazilian music by way of Portugal and much else. By the time he was in his early teens, John was irretrievably mesmerized by the sounds that leapt from his turntable. A polyglot who came to speak more than half a dozen languages, including Swahili, Mr. Roberts received a bachelor's degree in modern languages from Oxford University. In the mid-1960's he spent several years in Kenya as a reporter and editor on *The East African Standard*, a regional newspaper. Returning to London, he was a radio producer with the BBC World Service. Mr. Roberts moved to the United States in 1970, becoming an editor on the periodical *Africa Report*. He was later a freelance journalist, contributing articles on world music to *The Village Voice* and other publications. In the early 1980's, Mr. Roberts and Ms. Needham started Original Music, a mail-order company that distributed world-music books and records. In those pre-Internet days, Americans outside big cities found these almost as hard to come by as young Mr. Roberts had in postwar England. In business for nearly two decades, Original Music also released many well-received albums of its own. Among them are *The Sound of Kinshasa*, featuring Zairian guitar music; *Africa Dances*, an anthology of music from more than

a dozen countries; and *Songs the Swahili Sing*, devoted to the music of Kenya, an aural kaleidoscope of African, Arab and Indian sounds. Mr. Roberts's first marriage, to Jane Lloyd, ended in divorce. Besides Ms. Needham, whom he married in 1981, he is survived by two children from his first marriage, Stephen and Alice Roberts; three stepchildren, Melissa, Elizabeth and Stephen Keiper; two grandchildren; and three step-grandchildren. His other books include *Latin Jazz: The First of the Fusions, 1880s to Today* (Schirmer, 1999) and *A Land Full of People: Life in Kenya Today* (Praeger, 1968). In choosing what to release on the Original Music label, Mr. Roberts did not disdain modern, popular numbers: by his lights, a song simply had to be good. This distinguished him from musicological purists who, in ceaseless quest for the authentic, recorded only material seemingly untouched by modernity. In an interview with *The Los Angeles Times* in 1987, Mr. Roberts illuminated his selection process. 'I don't care how esoteric it is, but it's got to be terrific,' he said. 'Not this 'you-can't-hear-it-and-it's-terribly-performed-but-it's-really-very-interesting-because-it's-the-only-winkle-gathering-song-to-come-out-of-southeastern-Sussex' attitude'" [Margalit Fox, *The New York Times*, 12/10/09].

