

September 2002

**NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC IN PREMIERE OF ADAMS'S
ON THE TRANSMIGRATION OF SOULS**

September 19 marks the premiere of John Adams's newest score, *On the Transmigration of Souls*, with Lorin Maazel leading the Brooklyn Youth Chorus, New York Choral Artists, and the New York Philharmonic. The program at Avery Fisher Hall is repeated on September 20, 21, and 24. *On the Transmigration of Souls* was commissioned by an anonymous donor for the opening concerts of the New York Philharmonic's 2002-03 season, marking the somber anniversary of the September 11 attacks. It is scored for two choruses and orchestra, with computer-controlled electronic sound.

for reflection and
meditation

In composing *Souls*, Adams has sought to create a sonic "memory space...a place where you can go and be alone with your thoughts and emotions...[to] meditate on an unanswerable question." To prepare himself to write the piece, he came to New York, visited Ground Zero, and met with members of the victims' families. These encounters strengthened his resolve to create a work that honors the strong emotions of those who survived, without exploiting those emotions.

expressions of hope
and grief

The work's texts are divided between the pre-recorded sound and the live choruses. Through the sound system one hears various voices reading names of the missing; these are mixed in with ordinary sounds of everyday city life. The chorus sings texts drawn from the missing-person posters that had been posted by the families of the victims in the area around Ground Zero. Says Adams, "These signs had tremendous poignancy. Most had been hastily written and photocopied, usually with a snapshot photo along with a physical description and often a heart-wrenching little message at the end, something like 'Please come home, Louie. We miss you and we love you.' I realized that one of the great challenges of composing this piece would be finding a way to set the humblest of expressions like 'He was the apple of my father's eye,' or 'She looks so full of life in that picture.'"

more on *Souls*

Further remarks by Adams on *Souls* can be found at:
www.newyorkphilharmonic.org/adams/interview.cfm.