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John Adams

Doctor Atomic Symphony premiere at BBC Proms

Doctor Atomic Symphony

(world premiere)

21 August 2007, 7.30 pm
Royal Albert Hall,
BBC Proms, London
(concert broadcast live
on BBC Radio 3)

Pre-Prom talk, 6.00 pm
Royal Geographical Society

On 21 August the BBC Proms presents the world premiere of John Adams's most recent orchestral work, *Doctor Atomic Symphony*. The composer conducts the BBC Symphony Orchestra - in his role as its Artist-in-Association - and the concert also includes the piano concerto *Century Rolls* with Olli Mustonen as soloist and Copland's *Billy the Kid Suite*.

The new 42-minute orchestral work brings to the concert hall music from Adams's opera *Doctor Atomic*, telling the story of J. Robert Oppenheimer, the lead scientist in the development of the atom bomb, tested in the New Mexico desert in summer 1945. The symphony was co-commissioned by the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra, Carnegie Hall and BBC Radio 3 for the BBC Proms, and its US premiere is scheduled by the Saint Louis Symphony conducted by the work's dedicatee David Robertson on 7 February 2008. The orchestra visits Carnegie Hall to give the New York premiere on 16 February.

about the symphony

John Adams selected musical highlights from his opera and, rather than just creating a suite, opted to weave the material into a four-movement symphony, orchestrating vocal lines and composing new linking material as necessary. The first movement, *The Laboratory*, includes the *Overture* and science-based music from the first scene. *The Bedroom* includes intimate night-time exchanges between the two Oppenheimers akin to a slow movement, while *Panic* has a scherzo function including the nervous *Countdown* to the atom test in the opera's last scene. The brief final movement, *Trinity*, draws on the end of Act I featuring Oppenheimer's soul-searching music inspired by John Donne's sonnet *Batter my Heart, three-person'd God*.

the opera on stage

Doctor Atomic was premiered by San Francisco Opera in 2005. The Peter Sellars staging recently travelled to the Holland Festival and is presented by Chicago Lyric Opera in December this year. A new production is scheduled by the Metropolitan Opera in New York for premiere in October 2008.

Son of Chamber Symphony for concert and for dance

Son of Chamber Symphony

(world premiere)

30 November 2007, 8.00 pm
Dinkelspiel Auditorium,
Stanford

This autumn brings the world premiere of John Adams's current work-in-progress, *Son of Chamber Symphony*, a successor to his *Chamber Symphony* of 1992, one of his most popular pieces with close on 300 performances to date. *Son of Chamber Symphony* is commissioned by Stanford Lively Arts and Carnegie Hall for Alarm Will Sound and San Francisco Ballet for Mark Morris. The premiere takes place in Stanford on 30 November with a Carnegie Hall date set on 28 February 2008. Ballet performances choreographed by Mark Morris are scheduled during San Francisco Ballet's 2008 season.

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