

## John Adams



*John Adams Photo © Deborah O'Grady*

### The Music of John Adams

The strains of his grandfather's lakeside New England dance hall were among the earliest layers of John Adams's aural memory. So too were the marching bands in which he played clarinet as a young student. Learning the basic European canon in front of the family Magnavox, Adams readily assimilated it alongside the crazy quilt of American vernacular music he encountered in the early postwar decades. Duke Ellington is a recurrent inspiration, and Adams's love of jazz—which returns in unexpected forms, such as the improvisatory “hypermelody” of the Violin Concerto (1993) or the electric violin's raga-like musings in *The Dharma at Big Sur* (2003)—was early nurtured by his parents' activities in jazz groups. As a student at Harvard during the cataclysmic upheavals of the late Sixties, Adams experienced the cognitive dissonance of the arid pronouncements of contemporary serialists when confronted with the fresh, Dionysian inventiveness of this golden age of rock.

Adams eventually found his voice in the loosely experimental atmosphere of the California Bay Area where he relocated in his twenties. The Minimalist aesthetic lighted the way for Adams to reactivate the energetic pulsation and tonal basis of the jazz and rock idioms which seemed to legitimize the “pleasure principle” of listening. Yet early on Adams saw beyond the inherent limitations of Minimalism to a larger musical vision, as the seminal string septet *Shaker Loops* made clear. Already in his breakthrough orchestral works written for the San Francisco Symphony—culminating in *Harmonielehre*—Adams was displaying a genius for revitalizing the lofty rhetoric of romanticism and large forms with a contemporary sensibility. At the same time his early fascination with electronic music grew into a technologically enhanced palette that marries acoustic and synthesized sounds. Among Adams's most experimental soundscapes are the Pulitzer Prize-winning *On the Transmigration of Souls* and the music to depict the desert test site for the bomb in *Doctor Atomic*. From this array of influences, Adams continually generates new, unexpected compounds. His career can be viewed, as the composer puts it, as a quest “to forge a language, Whitman-like, out of the compost of American life.”

This grounding in the vernacular can lead to surprisingly witty collisions, such as the Chamber Symphony's mash-up of early Schoenberg with cartoon soundtracks. Alongside the rascally, Mark Twain-like “trickster” humor is a vein of deeply felt nostalgia and rueful intimacy that can evoke the elegiac, unsentimental tenderness of Copland. Adams is among the most frequently choreographed of contemporary composers in part because of the fascinating contexts in which he situates his dramatically propulsive rhythmic sensibility. He also refracts the pioneering perspective of Charles Ives, who remains a role model for keeping “the vernacular roots of the art alive” while experimenting without inhibition.

Adams's uniquely American perspective comes into intense focus in his operatic work, beginning with 1987's *Nixon in China*, whose theatrical depiction of the cultural clash between Communism and Capitalism revitalized the genre for an entire generation. Adams's works for the stage have profoundly shaped not just the evolution of his own musical language but contemporary perceptions of opera and its possibilities. His choice of subject matter in collaboration with long-term artistic partner Peter Sellars, while sometimes controversial, is rooted in the mythic potential of contemporary icons and events. Adams strives to create an American opera with larger cultural implications, a work of art that addresses the defining conflicts of our time without pap solutions, whether terrorism (in *The Death of Klinghoffer*), the experience of urban immigrants (in the millennial oratorio/opera *El Niño*), or the beginning of the atomic age (*Doctor Atomic*). Yet Adams continues to draw on the inspiration of old masters, as in the Mozart-tinged *A Flowering Tree*, in which an ancient South Indian folk tale proves a fertile source for yet another act of cultural cross-pollination. Adams has become a representative 21st-century composer who continues to find ideal subjects for his own art of musical metamorphosis.

Thomas May, 2008

(Thomas May is the editor of *The John Adams Reader* and author of *Decoding Wagner*, both from Amadeus Press. He writes frequently about music and theater.)

## OPERAS

### The Death of Klinghoffer

1990

2 hr 20 min

Opera in two acts

Text: Libretto by Alice Goodman (E)

S,M,C,T,3Bar,B; chorus(min:24 singers); dancers  
2(I,II=picc).2(II=corA).2(II=bcl).2(II=dbn)-2.2.2.0-  
perc(1):KAT MIDI mallet controller/timp-3kbd samplers-strings(8.8.6.6.4)

For complete technical requirements go to:  
<http://www.earbox.com/tech-guide/eq/ja-klng-eq.htm>

*"A work that fires the heart... Adams creates a revolutionary, continually shifting tapestry."*

*Katrine Ames, Newsweek*

9790051968800 (Vocal Score)

**World Premiere: 19 Mar 1991**

Théâtre de la Monnaie, Brussels, Belgium

Peter Sellars, director/Mark Morris, choreographer; Théâtre de la Monnaie

Conductor: Kent Nagano

### Doctor Atomic

2004-05

2 hr 53 min

opera in 2 acts

Text: libretto by Peter Sellars drawn from original sources

M, A, 2T, 2Bar, BBar, B; chorus;  
3(II, III=picc).3(III=corA).3(II=Ebcl, III=bcl,dbcl).3(III=dbn)  
-4.3(III=picc.tpt).3.1-harp-cel-timp-perc(4):I=thunder sheet/glsp/tgl/tuned  
gong/crot/susp.cym/med tam-t/BD/2roto toms/chinese cym/SD/tuned  
gongs;II=chimes/lg.tam-t/susp.chinese cym/crot/BD/tgl;III=tuned gongs/lo  
gong/susp.cym/thunder sheet/med tam-tlg tam-t/hi susp.cym/xyl/crot/chimes/low  
susp.cym/antique cym/hi tgl/med tam-t/sm tam-t/med gong/alarm bell/BD;IV=lg chinese  
cym/susp.cym/tam-t/tuned gongs/BD/2 high tgls/bass chime-computer-controlled sound  
system-strings

*"Doctor Atomic is a magnificent accomplishment that easily takes its place alongside the other  
Adams-Sellars triumphs — Nixon in China, The Death of Klinghoffer and El Niño — and in  
important respects goes beyond them. It contains music of unearthly splendour and gorgeous  
lushness, and its rich expressivity will take many hearings to absorb."*  
*Los Angeles Times*

*"Since Britten's death some 30 years ago, the American composer John Adams has emerged  
as the most powerful voice in the creation of opera... Doctor Atomic is a moving and  
compelling work of moral, as well as musical, grandeur... one is left with a sense of the terrible  
magnificence of atomic fission as well as its unimaginable destructiveness."*  
*Daily Telegraph*

**World Premiere: 01 Oct 2005**

San Francisco Opera House, San Francisco, CA, United States

Gerald Finley, bar / Kristine Jepson, mezz / Peter Sellars, dir; San Francisco Opera

Conductor: Donald Runnicles

## A Flowering Tree

2006

1 hr 53 min

Opera in 2 acts

Text: Libretto adapted by John Adams and Peter Sellars from a South Indian folktale and poems translated by A.K.Ramanujan (E-S)

lyrS,T,B soloists, SATB chorus (min.40);  
2.picc.treble recorder(=perc,opt.picc).alto recorder(=soprano recorder, perc,opt.fl)  
\*.2(II=corA).2.bcl.2(II=dbn)-4.2.3.0-timp.perc(4):I= glsp/wdbl/claves/pedal  
BD/SD/2susp.cyms/2tuned bongos (or roto toms)/tom-t/shaker/3  
tpl.blks/cowbell/bongo/maracas/BD/2 Japanese Bowl gong/Chinese  
cym/2tgls/slapstick;II= chimes/tgl/tamb/wdbl/susp.cym/rainmaker  
(med.)/BD/cast/bongo/SD; III=maracas/tamb/rainmaker (low)/high tgl/low tubular wind  
chimes; IV=shaker/rainmaker (low)-harp-cel-strings(min. 12.10.8.6.5) \*OPTIONAL:  
recorder players play some very simple percussion (rain sticks, etc.), or they can play  
only recorder.

*"The score is opulent, dreamlike, fiercely lyrical, at times shadowy and strange – unlike anything that the fifty-nine-year-old composer has written..."*

*The New Yorker*

*"...some of the most ravishingly beautiful passages of music that Adams has yet composed..."*

*[He] continues to develop and surprise — something of a late-flowering tree himself."*

*Daily Telegraph*

*"...a radiant sunburst of orchestral beauty. This score abounds in ravishing music, some of the most purely gorgeous music of recent years. ...Adams has grown into possibly our finest living composer. He never utilizes anything other than an utterly appropriate compositional element, a hallmark of this score's beauty and poise."*

*Audiophile Audition*

**World Premiere: 14 Nov 2006**

Halle E im MuseumsQuartier, Wien, Austria

Peter Sellars, dir / Jessica Rivera, sop / Russell Thomas, ten / Eric Owens, bar;  
Orquesta Sinfónica Juvenil Simón Bolívar; Schola Cantorum de Caracas  
Conductor: John Adams

## I was looking at the ceiling and then I saw the sky

1995

1 hr 50 min

Songplay in two acts

Text: Libretto and lyrics by June Jordan (E)

3M,highT,T,2Bar  
2reeds(I=cl,bcl,II=asax)-3kbd(I=pft/sampler,II=sampler,III=synth)-gtr(=elec.gtr)  
-db(=elec.bass gtr)-  
drum kit(=MIDI drums)

For complete technical requirements go to:  
<http://www.earbox.com/tech-guide/eq/ja-c-s-eq.htm>

**World Premiere: 03 May 1995**

Zellerbach Playhouse, University of California, Berkeley, USA

Peter Sellars, director; Paul Drescher Ensemble

Conductor: Grant Gershon

## El Niño

1999-2000

1 hr 45 min

A Nativity Oratorio

Text: Biblical texts, Gnostic Infancy Gospels, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, Rosario Castellanos (E-S)

S,M,Bar,3CT; chorus; 2(I,II=picc).2(I,II=corA).2(II=bcl).2(II=dbn)  
-3.0.3.0-perc(3):I=glsp/lo tgl/gong/almglocken/guiro/maracas;  
II=crot/almglocken/gong/hi cowbell/3tgl/tpl.bl; III=gong/chimes/crot/claves/2tgl/2temple  
bowls-harp-pft(=cel)-2kbd (I=pft,cel;II=sampler,cel)- 2steel string gtr-strings(minimum  
14.0.6.6.4)

for complete technical requirements go to:  
<http://www.earbox.com/tech-guide/eq/ja-elnino-eq.htm>

**World Premiere: 15 Dec 2000**

Châtelet, Paris, France

Dawn Upshaw/Lorraine Hunt-Lieberson/Willard White/Peter Sellars, director; Deutsches  
Symphonie Orchester/London Voices

Conductor: Kent Nagano

## Nixon in China

1987

2 hr 57 min

An opera in three acts

Text: Libretto by Alice Goodman (E,G)

colS,lyrS,3M,T,lyrBar,Bar,BBar; chorus; dancers  
2(I,II=picc).2(II=corA).3(I=Ebcl;II,III=bcl).4sax(S,2A,Bar).0-  
0.3.3.0-perc(1):BD/pedal BD/wdbl/susp.cym/SD/sandpaper blocks/  
tamb/hi-hat/TD/sizzle cym/glsp/slapping sound/tgl/sleigh bells-  
2elec pft-synth or sampler (Kurzweil K2000)-strings(minimum:6.6.4.4.2)

for complete technical requirements go to:  
<http://www.earbox.com/tech-guide/eq/ja-nix-eq.htm>

9790051968701 (Vocal Score)

**World Premiere: 22 Oct 1987**

Wortham Theater Center, Houston, USA

Peter Sellars, dir / Mark Morris, choreographer; Houston Grand Opera

Conductor: John DeMain

## FULL ORCHESTRA

### City Noir

2009 28 min

for orchestra

picc.3(III=picc).3.corA.3(III=bcl).bcl.Asax2.dbn--6.4.3.1--timp.perc(5):vib/lg  
sus.cym/SD/bongos; tuned gongs/sus.cym/glsp/mar/tam-t/BD/chimes/vib/low  
tom-toms/tgl/castanets/cowbell/clave/temple bl; chimes/glsp/tamb/med tam-t/2  
timbales/sus.cym/crotales/xyl; BD/tuned gongs/med tam-t/2  
sus.cym/mar/crotales/castanet/tgl/glsp; 2 tam-t/BD/sus.cym/tgl/temple block/SD/2  
tom-t/timbale/bongo/conga/tuned gongs.trap set--pft--cel--2harps--strings

**World Premiere: 08 Oct 2009**

Walt Disney Concert Hall, Los Angeles, CA, USA

Los Angeles Philharmonic

Conductor: Gustavo Dudamel

### Doctor Atomic Symphony

2007 25 min

for orchestra

2.picc.3(III=corA).3(II=Ebcl, III=bcl).3(III=dbn)  
-4.4(IV=picc.tpt).3.1-harp-cel-timp-perc(4):crotales/chimes/SD/thunder sheet/glsp/BD/2  
tam-t/2 susp.cym/tuned gongs-strings

**World Premiere: 21 Aug 2007**

Royal Albert Hall, London, United Kingdom

BBC Symphony Orchestra

Conductor: John Adams

FULL ORCHESTRA 4

## El Dorado

1991 31 min

Part I: The Machine in the Garden Part II: Soledades

3(II,III=picc).2.corA.3(II=Ebcl,III=bcl.2.dbn-4.3.  
(I,II=flgn).3.1-timp(=claves,sandpaper,tamb).perc(4):I=marimba/claves/cowbell/xyl/SD;  
II=cabasa/hi&lo tom-t/pedal BD/xyl/claves/bongos/3tpl.bl/bowed vib; III=hi-hat  
cym/SD/pedal BD/4timbales/metal pipe(2 small  
pieces)/TD/5tom-t;IV=claves/guiro/maracas/tamb/sandpaper/hi wdbl/BD-2kybd  
samplers-harp-strings

for complete technical requirements go to:

<http://www.earbox.com/tech-guide/eq/ja-eld-eq.htm>

9790051096381 (Full score)

**World Premiere: 11 Nov 1991**

San Francisco, CA, United States

San Francisco Symphony

Conductor: John Adams

## Guide to Strange Places

2001 27 min

for orchestra

2(II=picc).picc.2.corA.2.bcl.dbcl.2.dbn-4.3.3.1-timp.perc(4):I=marimba/glsp/BD/SD/cow  
bell; II=marimba/chimes/almglocken/tgl/crot; III=glsp/BD/lo roto-tom/hi  
tgl/crot/chimes/claves/almglocken; IV=chimes/BD/4 roto-toms/susp.cym/3  
susp.tgl/wdbl/almglocken-harp-pft-cel-strings

**World Premiere: 06 Oct 2001**

Concertgebouw, Amsterdam, Netherlands

Radio Filharmonisch Orkest

Conductor: John Adams

## Lollapalooza

1995 6 min

for orchestra

picc.2(III=picc).2.corA.2.Ebcl.bcl.3.dbn-4.3.2.btrbn.1-timp.perc(4):I=xyl/3lg  
roto-toms/susp.cym/sm tam-t;II=SD/pedal  
BD/maracas/tamb/claves;III=claves/wdbl/bongo/SD/low floor tom-t;IV=vibes, lg  
BD-pft-strings

9790051096367 (Full score)

**World Premiere: 10 Nov 1995**

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, United Kingdom

City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra

Conductor: Simon Rattle

FULL ORCHESTRA 4

## My Father Knew Charles Ives

2003

25 min

for orchestra

picc.3(III=picc).2.corA.3(III=Ebc1).bcl.2.dbn-4.4.3.1-timp(=2bowl gongs)  
-perc(4);crot/glsp/cowbell/xyl/2bowl  
gongs/mar;xyl/crot/SD/susp.cym/2tom-t/vib/almglocken/3high tgl/mar;chimes/crash  
cym/susp.cym/3high tgl;3tgl/2BD/tuned gongs/tam-t/almglocken/low  
susp.cym/vib/crot-pft-cel-harp-strings

**World Premiere: 30 Apr 2003**

Davies Symphony Hall, San Francisco, California, United States

San Francisco Symphony

Conductor: Michael Tilson Thomas

## Naive and Sentimental Music

1999

48 min

for orchestra

4(III,IV=picc).3(III=corA).3(II=bcl2).bcl.3(III=dbn)-4.4.3.2-timp.  
perc(5):I=vib/almglocken/xyl/2tgl/susp.cym/2sm chinese gongs/sm hi  
pitched bell/glsp; II=marimba/shaker/xyl/crot/almglocken/vib/susp.cym;  
III=xyl/glsp/lg BD/sm hi pitched bell/bowed vib/susp.cym; IV=chimes/  
hi anvil/tam-t/"ranch" tgl/5japanese temple bowls; V=5lo  
gongs/chimes/lg sleighbells/3"ranch" tgl/hi tgl/tam-t/susp.cym/susp.  
sizzle cym-2harps-pft-cel-kbd sampler-steel stringed gtr-strings

for complete technical requirements go to:

<http://www.earbox.com/tech-guide/eq/ja-nsm-eq.htm>

9790051261680 (Full score)

**World Premiere: 19 Feb 1999**

Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, Los Angeles, California, USA

Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra

Conductor: Esa-Pekka Salonen

FULL ORCHESTRA 5

## Short Ride in a Fast Machine

1986

4 min

Fanfare for orchestra

2.2picc.2.corA.4(III,IVadlib).3.dbn-4.4.3.1-timp.perc(3):2wdbl/tgl/  
xyl/crot/glsp/susp.cym/sizzle cym/SD/pedal BD/large BD/large tam-t/  
tamb-2synth(opt)-strings

for recommendations about synthesizer requirements go to:

<http://www.earbox.com/tech-guide/eq/ja-ride-eq.htm>

No specific software is required or supplied with hire materials

9790051211500 **Study Score - Hawkes Pocket Score 1150**

**World Premiere: 13 Jun 1986**

Mansfield, MA, United States

Pittsburg Symphony Orchestra

Conductor: Michael Tilson Thomas

## Slonimsky's Earbox

1996

14 min

for orchestra

2.picc.2.corA.3(III=Ebc1).bcl.3-4.4.3.1-timp.perc(3)-crot/marimba/  
glsp/xyl/2susp.cym/wdbl/claves/SD/hi-hat/tpl.bls/cast/shaker/tamb/  
tam-t/tgl/vib-harp-pft-sampler-strings  
Sampler is Kurzweil K2000 or Akai. Alternative would be celesta or  
small electronic jazz organ.

for complete sampler requirements go to:

<http://www.earbox.com/tech-guide/eq/ja-slon-eq.htm>

9790051096497 (Full score)

**World Premiere: 12 Sep 1996**

Bridgewater Hall, Manchester, United Kingdom

Halle Orchestra

Conductor: Kent Nagano

## Tromba Lontana

1986

4 min

Fanfare for orchestra

2.2picc.2.2.0-4.2(solos).0.0-perc(3):glsp/crot/susp.cym/vib-pft-harp-  
strings

**World Premiere: 04 Apr 1986**

Jones Hall, Houston, TX, USA

Houston Symphony

Conductor: Sergiu Commissiona

FULL ORCHESTRA 5

## CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

### Berceuse elegiaque

Ferruccio Busoni, arranged by John Adams

**1989** 9 min

arrangement for chamber orchestra of Busoni's Berceuse No.7 of Elegies (1907) for solo piano

2.1.1.bcl.2-2.0.0.0-timp(=gong)-pft(=cel)-harp-strings(min:6.6.4.4.2)

**World Premiere: 08 Jun 1989**

St Paul, Minnesota, United States

St Paul chamber Orchestra

Conductor: John Adams

Availability: Not available for performance in Germany, France and Columbia

### The Black Gondola

Franz Liszt, arranged by John Adams

**1989** 9 min

for orchestra or chamber orchestra, arrangement of Liszt's La Lugubre gondola II (1882)

2.2(II=corA).2(II=bcl).2-3.0.0.0-timp-harp-strings (min:6.6.4.4.2)

### Chamber Symphony

**1992** 23 min

1(=picc).1.2(I=Ebcl, II=bcl).2(II=dbn)-1.1.1.0-perc:trap set(cowbell/hi-hat cym/SD/pedal BD/wdbl/2bongos/3tom-t/roto toms/tamb/timbale/claves/conga)-keyboard sampler (Yamaha SY-77/SY-99 or Kurzweil K2000/2500)-strings 1.0.1.1.1.

For complete technical specifications go to:  
<http://www.earbox.com/tech-guide/eq/ja-cs-eq.htm>

9790051212231 **Study Score - Hawkes Pocket Score 1223**

**World Premiere: 17 Jan 1993**

Dr Anton Philipszaal, The Hague, Netherlands

Schoenberg Ensemble

Conductor: John Adams

### Christian Zeal and Activity

**1973** 10 min

for unspecified chamber ensemble

1.0.1.1-0.0.0.0-pre-recorded tape\*-harp-strings

\*tape may also be prepared by performing organisation

**World Premiere: 23 Mar 1973**

San Francisco Conservatory, San Francisco, CA, USA

San Francisco Conservatory New Music Ensemble

Conductor: John Adams

### Fearful Symmetries

**1988** 27 min

for orchestra or chamber orchestra

2(I,II=picc).2(II=corA).2.bcl.1-4sax(S,2A,Bar)-2.3.3.0-timp-2kybd samplers(Kurzweil K2000)-pft-strings(minimum:6.6.4.4.2)

For complete synthesizer/sampler requirements go to:  
<http://www.earbox.com/tech-guide/eq/ja-fs-eq.htm>

*"John Adams's Fearful Symmetries is such a perfect score for dance that it virtually choreographs itself. With its pulsating rhythms and minimalist drive, it sounds like an orchestrated traffic jam..." -- The Times (London)*

9790051096350 **(Full score)**

**World Premiere: 29 Oct 1988**

Avery Fisher Hall, New York, New York, United States

Orchestra of St Luke's

Conductor: John Adams

### Wiegenlied

Franz Liszt, arranged by John Adams

**1989** 4 min

for orchestra or chamber orchestra, arrangement of Liszt's Wiegenlied (1881)

2.1.2.0-0.0.0.0-harp-strings

## SOLO INSTRUMENT(S) AND ORCHESTRA

### Century Rolls

**1997** 31 min

for piano and orchestra

2.picc.2.corA.2.bcl.2-3.3.2.0-timp.perc(2):vib/xyl/wdbl/marimba/  
high bongo/glsp-harp-cel-strings

9790051246335 **Piano**  
9790051096480 **(Full score)**

**World Premiere: 25 Sep 1997**  
Severance Hall, Cleveland, USA  
Emanuel Ax, piano; Cleveland Orchestra  
Conductor: Christoph von Dohnanyi

### The Dharma at Big Sur

**2003** 27 min

for electric violin and orchestra

0.0.2bcl.0-4.3.2.btrbn.1-2harps-2kbd samplers-timp-perc(4):I=vib/glsp/mar/chimes;  
II=almglocken/xyl; III=4bowl gongs/glsp/chimes/almglocken/tgl; IV=tuned  
gongs/2pots/crotales-strings

For complete technical requirements go to:  
<http://www.earbox.com/tech-guide/eq/ja-dha-eq.htm>

**World Premiere: 24 Oct 2003**  
Walt Disney Concert Hall, Los Angeles, California, United States  
Tracy Silverman, violin; Los Angeles Philharmonic  
Conductor: Esa-Pekka Salonen

### Eros Piano

**1989** 15 min

for piano and orchestra or chamber orchestra

2(I,II=picc).2.2(II=bcl).2-2.0.0.0-perc(1):vib/crot/maracas-  
synth(opt)-strings(minimum:6.6.4.4.2)

For complete technical information (for optional synthesizer) go to:  
<http://www.earbox.com/tech-guide/eq/ja-eros-eq.htm>

**World Premiere: 24 Nov 1989**  
London, Queen Elizabeth Hall, United Kingdom  
Paul Crossley, piano; London Sinfonietta  
Conductor: John Adams

### Gnarly Buttons

**1996** 26 min

for clarinet and small orchestra

corA.bn-trbn-gtr(=banjo/mandolin)-2kbd(I=pft)-strings (min 1.1.1.1.1.1,  
max 6.6.4.4.2)

for complete technical requirements go to:  
<http://www.earbox.com/tech-guide/eq/ja-gb-eq.htm>

9790051582211 **Clarinet, Piano**  
9790051096404 **(Full score)**

**World Premiere: 19 Oct 1996**  
Queen Elizabeth Hall, London, United Kingdom  
Michael Collins, clarinet; London Sinfonietta  
Conductor: John Adams

### La Mufa

#### Tango

Astor Piazzolla, arranged by John Adams

**1995** 5 min

for violin and orchestra

2.1.1.bcl.2-2.0.0.0-pft-strings

**World Premiere: 16 Jan 1997**  
Philharmonie, Cologne, Germany  
Gidon Kremer, violin; Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen

### Todo Buenos Aires

Astor Piazzolla, arranged by John Adams

**1996** 5 min

for violin and orchestra

1.1.1.bcl.2-2.0.0.0-timp-pft-strings

**World Premiere: 19 Feb 1997**  
Heidelberg, Germany  
Gidon Kremer, violin; Philharmonische Orchester Heidelberg  
Conductor: Thomas Kalb

## Violin Concerto

1993

33 min

for violin and orchestra or chamber orchestra

2(I,II=picc).2(II=corA).2(II=bcl).2-2.1.0.0-perc(2):

I=marimba/t.bell/2bongo/2conga/BD/susp.cym/tamb;

II=bongo/guero/timp/bowed vib/t.bells/clave/hi cowbell/BD-

2synth(Yamaha SY99 & Kurzweil K2000, or 2 Kurzweil K2000)-  
strings(min:6.6.5.5.2) NB: min strength advised in 1st movement

for complete synthesizer/sampler requirements go to:

<http://www.earbox.com/tech-guide/eq/ja-vc-eq.htm>

9790051351619 **Violin, Piano**

9790051096398 **(Full score)**

**World Premiere: 19 Jan 1994**

Ordway Music Theater, Saint Paul, MN, USA

Jorja Fleezanis, violin; Minnesota Orchestra

Conductor: Edo de Waart

## VOICE(S) AND ORCHESTRA

### The Death of Klinghoffer

#### Aria of the Falling Body 1990

7 min 30 sec

for baritone and orchestra

picc.1.2.2.2-2.0.2.0-2 or 3kbd samplers-strings(8.8.6.6.4)

For complete technical requirements requirements go to:  
<http://www.earbox.com/tech-guide/eq/ja-klng-eq.htm>

### The Death of Klinghoffer

#### Bird Aria 1990

4 min 30 sec

for baritone and orchestra

Text: Alice Goodman (E)

picc.1.2(II=corA).2(II=bcl).1.dbn-2.0.2.0-2 or 3kbd samplers-strings(8.8.6.6.4)

For complete technical requirements requirements go to:  
<http://www.earbox.com/tech-guide/eq/ja-klng-eq.htm>

### Doctor Atomic

#### Batter my heart, three person'd God 2005

7 min

for baritone and orchestra

2.picc.3.3(III=bcl).3-4.3.3.1-timp-harp-perc(2)chimes/tuned gongs-strings

*"Oppenheimer begins to sing, pouring out his soul in stark, anguished, cantorial phrases. The words – 'Batter my heart, three-person'd God' – are John Donne's, the music is the creation of America's greatest living composer, and the scene compresses all the terror and fascination of the opera's subject into eight minutes of wrenching, sinewy musical genius... a major addition to the operatic repertory of this new century."*

*San Francisco Chronicle*

### Doctor Atomic

#### Easter Eve 1945 2004

12 min

for mezzo-soprano and orchestra

Text: Muriel Rukeyser (E)

3(II, III=picc).3(III=corA).3(III=bcl).2.dbn-4.3.3.0-harp-cel-perc(4):I=thunder sheet/glsp/tgl/tuned gong;II=chimes;III=lg tam-t/hi susp.cym/xyll/crot;IV=lg.chinese cym/susp.cym/tam-t(with superball)/tuned gongs-strings

#### World Premiere: 21 May 2004

Avery Fisher Hall, New York, New York, United States

Audra McDonald, soprano; New York Philharmonic

Conductor: John Adams

### Le Livre de Baudelaire

Claude Debussy, arranged by John Adams

#### 1994

22 min

Four songs from Debussy's Cinq poemes de Baudelaire, arranged for soprano and orchestra

Text: Charles Baudelaire (F)

3(III=picc).2.2.bcl.2-4.0.0.0-perc(1 or 2):timp/xyll/bell tree/  
low susp.cym/tgl/tam-t-harp-cel-strings

#### World Premiere: 10 Mar 1994

Concertgebouw, Amsterdam, United States

Roberta Alexander, soprano; Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra

Conductor: John Adams

### Nixon in China (Arias from the opera)

#### Arias from the opera 1987

24 min

for soprano, baritone and orchestra

Text: Alice Goodman

2(I,II=picc).2(II=corA).3(I=Ebcl;II,III=bcl).4sax(S,2A,Bar).0-0.3.3.0-perc(1):BD/pedalBD/wdbl/susp.cym/SD/sandpaper blocks/tamb/hi-hat/TD/sizzle cym/glsp/slapping sound/tgl/sleigh bells-2pft-synth or sampler (Kurzweil K2000 or Yamaha HX-1 Electone)-strings(minimum:6.6.4.4.2)

for complete technical requirements go to:  
<http://www.earbox.com/tech-guide/eq/ja-nix-eq.htm>

## The Nixon Tapes

version 1

1998

56 min

Scenes from Nixon in China for chorus, voices and orchestra

2.2.3.4sax.0-0.3.3.0-perc(1)-2pft-synth or sampler (Kurzweil K2000)  
-strings(minimum:6.6.4.4.2)

2 high baritone.1 lyric sop.1coloratura sop.1bass, SATB chorus  
Selection: From Act 1 scene 1: Overture, Chorus "Soldiers of Heaven"  
Landing of Air Force One."News has a kind of mystery".Act 1 Scene 3  
complete.  
From Act 2: "This is Prophetic". "I am the wife of Mao Tse Tung"

For complete technical requirements go to:  
<http://www.earbox.com/tech-guide/eq/ja-nix-eq.htm>

**World Premiere: 17 Jul 1998**

Aspen, Colorado, United States

James Maddalena, John Duykers/Trudy Ellen Craney Elissa Johnston, Pat/William  
Sharp, Cho-en Lai; Aspen Chamber Orchestra  
Conductor: John Adams

## The Nixon Tapes

version 2

1998

49 min

Scenes from Nixon in China for chorus, voices and orchestra

2.2.3.4sax.0-0.3.3.0-perc(1)-2elec pft-strings (pref.8.8.6.6.4)

2 high baritone.1 lyric sop.1coloratura sop.1bass, SATB chorus  
Selection: From Act 1 scene 1: Overture, Chorus "Soldiers of Heaven"  
Landing of Air Force One."News has a kind of mystery".Act 1 Scene 3  
complete.  
From Act 2: "This is Prophetic".

## The Nixon Tapes

version 3

1998

51 min

Scenes from Nixon in China for solo voices and orchestra

2.2.3.4sax.0-0.3.3.0-perc(1)-2pft-synth or sampler (Kurzweil K2000 or Yamaha HX-1  
Electone)-strings(minimum:6.6.4.4.2)  
strings (pref.8.8.6.6.4)

2 high baritone.1 lyric sop.1coloratura sop.1bass (no chorus)  
Selection: Landing of the Spirit of '76, "News has a kind of mystery",  
"This is prophetic". Act 3 complete.

For complete technical specifications go to:  
<http://earbox.com/tech-guide/eq/ja-nix-eq.htm>

## The Wound-Dresser

1988-89

19 min

for baritone and chamber orchestra

Text: Walt Whitman (E)

2(=picc).2.1.bcl.2-2.1(=picc tpt).0.0-timp-kbd sampler(Kurzweil K2000)  
strings(minimum:6.6.4.4.2)

for complete synthesizer/sampler requirements go to:  
<http://www.earbox.com/tech-guide/eq/ja-wd-eq.htm>

9790051211623 **Study Score - Hawkes Pocket Score 1162**

**World Premiere: 24 Feb 1989**

St Paul, Minnesota, United States

Sanford Sylvan, baritone; St Paul Chamber Orchestra

Conductor: John Adams

## CHORUS AND ORCHESTRA

### The Death of Klinghoffer

**Choruses from The Death of Klinghoffer**  
**1990**

45 min

for chorus and orchestra

Text: Alice Goodman (E)

2(I,II=picc).2(II=corA).2(II=bcl).2(II=dbn)-2.2.2.0-  
perc(1):timp-2kbd samplers-strings(8.8.6.6.4)

For complete technical requirements go to:  
<http://www.earbox.com/tech-guide/eq/ja-khfrch-eq.htm>

### El Niño

**1999-2000**

1 hr 45 min

A Nativity Oratorio

Text: Biblical texts, Gnostic Infancy Gospels, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, Rosario  
Castellanos (E-S)

S,M,Bar,3CT; chorus; 2(I,II=picc).2(I,II=corA).2(II=bcl).2(II=dbn)  
-3.0.3.0-perc(3):I=glsp/lo tgl/gong/almglocken/guero/maracas;  
II=crot/almglocken/gong/hi cowbell/3tgl/tpl.bl; III=gong/chimes/crot/claves/2tgl/2temple  
bowls-harp-pft(=cel)-2kbd (I=pft,cel;II=sampler,cel)- 2steel string gtr-strings(minimum  
14.0.6.6.4)

for complete technical requirements go to:  
<http://www.earbox.com/tech-guide/eq/ja-elnino-eq.htm>

**World Premiere: 15 Dec 2000**

Châtelet, Paris, France

Dawn Upshaw/Lorraine Hunt-Lieberson/Willard White/Peter Sellars, director; Deutsches  
Symphonie Orchester/London Voices  
Conductor: Kent Nagano

## On the Transmigration of Souls

**2002**

27 min 30 sec

for orchestra, chorus, children's chorus and pre-recorded soundtrack

SATB Chorus; children's chorus;  
3(III=picc).picc.3.2.bcl.dbcl.2.dbn-4.4.3.2-timp.perc(4):I=glsp; II=crot/hi tgl; III=chimes/2  
hi tgls; IV=2 hi tgls/susp.cym/brake dr-2harp-pft-cel-kybd sampler(optional)\*  
-strings-pre-recorded tape-computer-controlled sound system

\*acoustic piano tuned 1/4 tone lower. Transposed part (1/2 step higher) available with  
performance materials. A sampler may be used as an alternative.

**World Premiere: 19 Sep 2002**

Avery Fisher Hall, New York, New York, United States

Brooklyn Youth Chorus and New York Choral Artists; New York Philharmonic

Conductor: Lorin Maazel

## ENSEMBLE AND CHAMBER WITHOUT VOICE(S)

### Fellow Traveler

**2007** 5 min

for string quartet  
string quartet

### John's Book of Alleged Dances

**1994** 35 min

for string quartet and pre-recorded CD  
string quartet and pre-recorded performance CD

for complete technical requirements go to:  
<http://www.earbox.com/tech-guide/eq/ja-ad-eq.htm>

9790051106240 **String Quartet, CD**

9790051212859 **Study Score - Hawkes Pocket Score 1285**

**World Premiere: 19 Nov 1994**

California Center for the Arts, Escondido, United States  
Kronos Quartet

### Lollapalooza

John Adams, arranged by James Spinazzola

**1995/2006** 6 min

arrangement for wind ensemble

2(II=picc).picc.2.corA.3.Ebcl.bcl.cbcl.ssax.asax.tsax.bsax.3(III=cbn)  
-4.3.2.btrbn.euphonium.1-timp.perc(4):SD/BD/sus.cym/sm.tam-t/lg.tam-t/3 lg roto  
toms/pedal BD/maracas/tamb/claves/bongo/xyl/vib/mar-pft-db

9790051662098 **Band (full score only)**

9790051662104 **Band (score & parts)**

### Scratchband

**1996, rev.1997** 12 min

for amplified ensemble

1(=picc).1.2(II=bcl).0-1.1.1.0-pft.sampler\*-elec.gtr-5string bass gtr-  
perc(1):pedalBD/4tom-t/2bongos/SD/tamb/hi-hat/cym/ride cym/wdbl/  
cowbell/3tpl.bl/cast/claves/maracas/roto tom or timp(opt)  
\* Kurzweil K2000 or AKAI S1000

For complete technical requirements go to:  
<http://www.earbox.com/tech-guide/eq/ja-sb-rv-eq.htm>

**World Premiere: 13 Apr 1996**

Penn State University, University Park, Pennsylvania, United States  
Ensemble Modern  
Conductor: John Adams

### Short Ride in a Fast Machine

**1986** 4 min

arranged for concert band by Lawrence T Odom (1991)

2fl.2picc.2.corA.Ebcl.2solo Acl/3Bbcl/bcl.alcl.3bsn.sax(SATB)-  
4hn.4crts.2tp.4tbn.baritones.4tubas-celli-basses-perc(3):wdbl/SD/  
glsp/crot/susp.cyms/BD/pedal BD/timp/sizzle cym/tamb/tgl/xyl/tam-t-  
2synth(Casio 200 series or Yamaha 2X series with Harpsichord stop)-  
cel

NB: harp part in full score to be omitted. Multiple celli optional.

9790051656813 **Symphonic Band (score & parts)**

9790051656820 **Symphonic Band (full score)**

**World premiere of version: 26 Jun 1991**

RNCM, Manchester, United Kingdom  
Royal Northern College of Music Wind Orchestra  
Conductor: Clark Rundell/Timothy Reynish

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## Son of Chamber Symphony

2007

23 min

for chamber ensemble

1(=picc).1.1.bcl.1-1.1.1.0-perc(2):chimes/kybd sampler(or high thunder sheet)/3  
bongos/conga dr/clave/susp.cym/cowbell;kybd sampler/glsp/temple  
bl/cast/3bongos/conga dr/clave/wdbl/hi-hat cym/susp.cym/cowbell/3 low tom-t/pedal  
BD-pft(=cel or kybd sampler)-strings(1.1.1.1.1)

*"This 25-minute opus bursts with technical prowess and cogent wit."*  
*San Francisco Chronicle*

*"Son is as difficult as his original chamber symphony, if not more so. The first movement sets out to the accompaniment of a rhythmic motif lifted from the Scherzo of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, then nervously yet confidently scurries all over the place, changing meters all the time. Absorbing its interesting details will require many listenings. The last movement is one of those Adams bucking-bronco blastoffs, riveting and full of surprises."*  
*Los Angeles Times*

**World Premiere: 30 Nov 2007**

Dinkelspiel Auditorium, Stanford, CA, USA  
Alarm Will Sound  
Conductor: Alan Pierson

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## String Quartet

2008

28 min

for string quartet

**World Premiere: 29 Jan 2009**

Juilliard School, New York, NY, USA  
St Lawrence String Quartet

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**PIANO(S)**

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**American Berserk**

**2001**

6 min

for solo piano

9790051246267 **Piano**

**World Premiere: 25 Feb 2002**

Carnegie Hall, New York, New York, United States

Garrick Ohlsson, piano;

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**Hallelujah Junction**

**1998**

17 min

for two pianos

9790051277643 **2 Pianos, 4 Hands**

**World Premiere: 03 Apr 1998**

Getty Center, Los Angeles, California, USA

Gloria Cheng, piano / Grant Gershon, piano

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**INSTRUMENTAL**

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**Postmark (from Fearful Symmetries)**

**2009**

2 min 30 sec

for soprano saxophone and piano, arr. by Marilyn Shrude  
soprano saxophone and piano

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**Road Movies**

**1995**

16 min

for violin and piano  
9790051351770 **Violin, Piano**

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**World Premiere: 23 Oct 1995**  
Kennedy Center, Washington, DC, USA  
Robin Lorentz, violin/ Vicky Ray, piano;

**VOCAL**

**Nixon in China**

**This is Prophetic! (Pat's Aria)**

**1987**

for soprano and piano

Text: Alice Goodman

**MISCELLANEOUS**

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**Hoodoo Zephyr**

1993

50 min

for tape

Work for midi keyboard for Nonesuch CD (no performance materials available)

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**Light Over Water**

1983

44 min

two channel tape

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