

# CONTEMPO

# FLUX

Fall Chamber  
Music Concert  
2017

Saturday, December 3  
Schoenberg Hall, Schoenberg  
Music Building 1<sup>pm</sup>

Arvo Pärt *Mozart-Adagio* (1992)  
John Adams *Road Movies* (1995)  
John Adams *Son of Chamber Symphony* (2007)

Free Admission  
Presented by the

**UCLA** Herb Alpert School of Music  
Department of Music

## PROGRAM

### Road Movies (1995)

ADAMS, John (b. 1947)

- I. Relaxed and Groove
- II. Meditative
- III.: 40% Swing

Xenia DEVIATKINA-LOH, *Violin*  
Nicholas CARLOZZI, *Piano*

### Mozart-Adagio (1992, rev. 2005)

PÄRT, Arvo (1935-)

Charlie THOLLANDER, *Violin*  
Nathan BERNACKI, *Violoncello*  
Nick CARLOZZI, *Piano*

### Son of Chamber Symphony (2007)

ADAMS, John

- I.
- II.
- III.

Anastasia Petanova, *Flute/Piccolo*  
Sydney Chou, *Oboe*  
Dalton Tran, *Clarinet*  
Dawn Hamilton, *Bass Clarinet*  
Ryan Yamashiro, *Bassoon*  
Max Paulus, *French Horn*  
Everett Kelly, *Trumpet*  
Aidan Ritchie, *Trombone*  
Dante Luna, *Percussion*  
David Riccobono, *Percussion*  
Rosalind Wong, *Piano*  
Xenia Deviatkina-Loh, *Violin I*  
Stephanie Spencer, *Violin II*  
Alec Santamaria, *Viola*  
Niall Ferguson, *Violoncello*  
Jules Levy, *Contrabass*  
Geoffrey Pope, *Conductor*

*\*Please note that this program will be performed without intermission.*

## **JOHN ADAMS**

American composer John Adams is distinctive among his contemporaries, for his compositions entail profound musicianship and intellectual artistry. They possess an extensive and demonstrative vernacular of academic modernism, with influences of his New World surroundings.

Born and raised in New England, John Adams learned to play the clarinet from his father and regularly performed in marching bands and community orchestras. He began composing at age ten. His path as a composer was formed by having absorbed various vernacular styles from pop and rock to jazz, by a rigorous course of music study at Harvard, and his regular attendance at Boston Symphony Orchestra concerts.

Adams taught composition at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music and was the composer-in-residence of the San Francisco Symphony from 1982-1985, where he established the "New and Unusual Music" series. The orchestra premiered many of his iconic works, including *Harmonium* (1981), *Grand Pianola Music* (1981), *Harmonielehre* (1985), *My Father Knew Charles Ives* (2003), and *Absolute Jest* (2012).

His collaboration with poet Alice Goodman, and stage director Peter Sellers, beginning in 1985 created two seminal operas: *Nixon in China* (1987), and *The Death of Klinghoffer* (1991). He furthered his collaboration with Peter Sellers, which resulted in five additional works: the 1995 'songplay' *I Was Looking at the Ceiling and Then I Saw the Sky* – libretto by June Jordan, *El Niño* (2000), *Doctor Atomic* (2005), *A Flowering Tree* (2006), and *The Gospel According to the Other Mary* (2012) – written for Gustavo Dudamel and the Los Angeles Philharmonic.

Adams has been granted honorary doctorates from Harvard University, Yale University, Northwestern University, Cambridge University, and the Juilliard School; and was honored with the

Governor's Award by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger of California for his distinguished service for the arts and his adopted home state. He received the Grawemeyer Award in 1993 for his Violin Concerto, and the 2003 Pulitzer Prize in Music for *On the Transmigration of Souls*, a work commissioned by the New York Philharmonic to commemorate the first anniversary of 9/11. Adams' music has been featured in numerous films, including *I Am Love*, *Barfly*, and *Birdman*.

Adams is in demand as a conductor as well, having appeared with major orchestras internationally, such as the New York Philharmonic, Cleveland Orchestra, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, the BBC Symphony, and the London Symphony Orchestra; in programs that are combinations of his own works and an array of repertoire, varying from Beethoven and Mozart, to Ives, Zappa, and Ellington. He is to appear with the Berlin Philharmonic, Suisse Romande Orchestra, Netherlands Radio Philharmonic, London Symphony Orchestra, BBC Symphony, and the Los Angeles Philharmonic as conductor, and is also the Composer-In-Residence with the Berlin Philharmonic for their 2016-17 season.

Adams has become a crucial figure for younger generation composers. He and his wife, photographer Deborah O'Grady, created "The Pacific Harmony Foundation", which supports commissions and performances of new works and musical education initiatives nationally. His educative activities not only have local influences (the John Adams Young Composers program in Berkeley, California), but also international impacts (directing the Juilliard and Royal Academy of Music orchestras at Avery Fisher Hall and the BBC Proms).

Adams is also a highly respected writer; he regularly contributes to the New York Times Book Review, and has written for The New Yorker and The London Times. Adams won the Northern California Book Award for Creative Nonfiction, and was named one of the "most notable books of the year" by The New York

Times, for his commendable volume of memoirs and commentary on American musical life: *Hallelujah Junction*.

### **ROAD MOVIES (1995)**

*The title "Road Movies" is total whimsy, probably suggested by the "groove" in the piano part, all of which is required to be played in a "swing" mode – John Adams, September 1995*

*Road Movies* was commissioned by the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., and premiered in the Kennedy Center on October 23, 1995, with violinist Robin Lorentz and pianist Vicki Ray. This piece, as the title suggests, is referring to the road, or more specifically, driving through landscape. Less about drama and more about concept, it is a reminiscence of travelling, where nothing significant happens and every once in awhile an object comes and goes, like the motifs in the piece. Adams described the first movement of this work as “a relaxed drive down a not unfamiliar road”, the second movement as “A solitary figure in a empty desert landscape”, and the final movement as “a big perpetual motion machine called ‘40% Swing’, for four wheel drives only”.

The entire work is based around three tonal centers: F#, D, and A. Adams furthers the homogeneity of the piece by exercising motoric 16<sup>th</sup>-notes in both the first and third movements evoke the imagery of driving through an unchanging landscape on a never-ending road. In the first movement, above the perpetuating motor of the piano, the violin gently floats on top with light interjections, perhaps depicting the incidental objects that one passes during a road-trip.

The second movement acts as a respite to the first movement. Slow arpeggios built on a low D pedal in the piano draw out a still and spacious landscape. The harmony is a D split-3rd, a common Blues idiom where both the major and minor 3rds, F# and F respectively, are present in the harmony. The violin soon joins the piano in its arpeggios, engendering a luxurious

atmosphere. Furthermore, the violin is detuned – the G string (lowest string) tuned a tone down to an F – Adams notes it creates a “sagging sound, giving an extra sense of relaxation and pensive reflection” to the entire resonance. All these elements generate an insouciant and unruffled aura. With this movement, Adams manages to create an ambiance nostalgic of the American outback. The movement ends on a D9 split-3rd chord in 1st inversion, with the low D pedal that supported this harmony in the opening now gone.

The third movement takes us back on the road. Motor motion from the first movement has returned as the piano and violin fire away with sixteenth notes in jolting syncopations, resulting in an exciting and virtuosic finale. The disposition of *Road Movies* in both structure and timbre conveys a vivid illustration of a traveller and its surrounding landscape.

*Notes by Xenia Deviatkina-Loh and Nicholas Carlozzi*

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### **ARVO PÄRT**

Arvo Pärt is an Estonian-born composer who has been vastly influential in contemporary classical music by means of his powerfully spiritual tonal approach. Raised in Rakvere, Estonia, Pärt studied music at Tallinn Music Middle School as well as Tallinn Conservatory. While studying composition in the conservatory, he also worked for Estonian Radio as a sound producer. Pärt’s musical exposure as a youth was severely restricted by the Soviet Union in the course of its occupation of Estonia during WWII. In 1960 he was denounced by the Union of Soviet Composers for his use of serialism, causing a long-lasting tension between Pärt and the Soviet Union. Soviet censors repeatedly outlawed his early music, causing long periods of creative silence from Pärt. Despite these oppressive circumstances, Pärt managed to win first place in a Union of Soviet Composers competition in 1962, a feat that compromised

the Union's consensus on what was musically permitted. Eventually, Pärt was able to escape the tyrannical clutches of the Soviet Union as he was allowed to move to Berlin in 1981. Pärt now lives both in Berlin and in Tallinn with his wife Nora.

## MOZART-ADAGIO

*Mozart-Adagio* is a brief work that compellingly re-imagines the second movement of W. A. Mozart's *Piano Sonata No. 2 in F-major, KV 280*. The strings open the piece with spacious dissonances that evoke a solemn moan followed by a statement of Mozart's theme in the piano. The original music is distorted with subtle dissonances that increase towards a jolting climax before fading into the spacious sound-world that began the piece. Pärt takes a cautious and respectful approach to Mozart's music in order to achieve just the right balance between Mozart's compositional style and Pärt's Tintinnabuli, which is a minimalist style that mimics the sounds of bells and is often slow and meditative.

Pärt composed this trio in memory of his friend, Oleg Kagan, a well-known violinist and Mozart-interpreter who often performed in a trio with the pianist Sviatoslav Richter and his cellist wife, Natalja Gutman. The piece was premiered at the Helsinki Festival "Helsingin juhlat" on September 6, 1992, with the well-known American chamber ensemble, the Kalichstein-Laredo-Robinson Trio. Much of Pärt's grief is expressed through lingering dissonances that Mozart would normally resolve. These dissonances set the tone for the entire piece, which is one of sorrow and deep respect.

*Notes by Charlie Thollander, Nathan Bernacki, and Nicholas Carlozzi*

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## SON OF CHAMBER SYMPHONY (2007)

This 23-minute work by John Adams was commissioned by the San Francisco Ballet, Stanford University, and Carnegie Hall. It was premiered at Stanford University in 2007, and first performed with choreography by Mark Morris by the San Francisco Opera Ballet at the San Francisco War Memorial Opera House under the title *Joyride* in 2008. Shortly after the piece was premiered, the London Sinfonietta performed and recorded it. *Son of Chamber Symphony* follows Adams' *Chamber Symphony* which was inspired both by Arnold Schönberg's *Chamber Symphony No. 1* and the sounds of 1950's cartoon music. Like much of Adams' music, *Son of Chamber Symphony* primarily concerns the myriad of interrelations the instruments in the ensemble have with each other, which is demonstrated through Adams' diverse manipulation of meter and rhythms, and instrumentation grouping. Due to this work being a collaboration with young dancers of the San Francisco Ballet, Adams was attentive to the staging component of this work, thus the edginess in character.

The first movement is driven by a relentless pulse and resembles an animated chase scene. It is through Adams' manipulation of rests and meticulous notation that establish the complex rhythms. Nevertheless, no matter its convolutedness, someone is always maintaining the pulse, reminding everyone that all this excitement is pivoting around utterly simple time signatures.

As a contrast to the animated first movement, the second movement is comparatively tranquil, featuring an extensive and sonorous theme exchanged between the woodwinds and the duo of violin and violoncello. The ensemble accompanies the melody with a multitude of rhythmic punctuations which eventually amalgamate into an incessant, motoric pulse. Both

melody and support thus share and exchange equally consequential roles.

Though this movement also features a constant pulse, it differs from the previous movements in its brisker tempo, thicker orchestration, its denser dynamics, and rapid procession of mini climaxes. This wonderfully accumulates to an climax that serves not only this movement, but the entire work. Subsequently, Adams closes with an atypical “surprise” ending – he neither de-escalates the previous commotion nor escalates to a thunderous finale. *Son of Symphony* simply and abruptly ends, subtly conveying to some the message that all was much ado about nothing.

*Notes by Xenia Deviatkina-Loh, Stephanie Spencer, Alec Santamaria, Niall Ferguson, Jules Levy, Anastasia Petanova, Sydney Chou, Dalton Tran, Dawn Hamilton, Ryan Yamashiro, Max Paulus, Everett Kelly, Aidan Ritchie, Rosalind Wong, David Riccobono, Dante Luna, and Geoffrey Pope.*

## ABOUT THE ARTWORK

*Varying shapes and colors function as experimental music notations where melody, harmony, duration, influence form. This poster references John Adams’ and Arvo Pärt’s compositions as well as artist Wadada Leo Smith, whose compositional approaches to music notation reveal remarkable methods of visually translating sound to image. Arrangement and spacing of letter forms express the overlapping of notes where curves and edges meet to direct the flow of sound.*

*Emily Eck*

## THANKS TO:

The Fall 2016 program and poster art was designed by Emily Eck.

Contempo Flux is directed by Gloria Cheng.

Contempo Flux thanks the Hugo Davies Fund for supporting the rental of parts for John Adams’ *Son of Chamber Symphony*.

Thanks also to our piano technician, Michael Kemper, and our audio-visual engineer, Luis Henao, for making this concert possible!

Please join the musicians in the Green Room for a light reception after the concert!

