USC students visit the Walt Disney Concert Hall to see Gustavo Dudamel conduct the LA Philharmonic. They will perform John Adams’s *The Gospel According to the Other Mary*. Based on the New Testament stories of Lazarus and Jesus’s Passion as well as contemporary Latin American poetry, Adams’ work takes a fresh approach to combining seemingly disparate materials. The performance will be fully staged by acclaimed director Peter Sellars.

**ROSS SCIMECA** of the USC Libraries has selected the following resources to help you learn more about Adams and his works.

**Introduction**

I have been a John Adams fan since I first heard his *Harmonielehre* back in the 1985. I have seen his operas both here (*Nixon in China*) and in San Francisco (*The Death of Klinghoffer* and *Doctor Atomic*). Like Philip Glass and Steve Reich, Adams began his musical career as a minimalist. He has evolved to become one of this country’s most celebrated composers.

I heard *The Gospel According to the Other Mary* last year as a dramatic oratory. You will be hearing this work in a semi-staged production by Peter Sellars. Regardless of how it is presented, this profound composition is a direct descendent to Bach’s *St. Matthew’s Passion* and *St. John’s Passion*.

As in his choral composition *El Nino* from a few years back, Adams uses religious texts for their social significance. In *The Gospel According to the Other Mary*, Adams selects New Testament passages dealing with Mary Magdalene, her brother Lazarus and Martha of Bethany pertaining to Jesus’s passion and death. These texts alternate with passages by social activist Dorothy Day and poets Louise Erdrich, Rosario Castellanos, Hildegard of Bingen, Primo Levi and Rubén Dario.

**Recommended Readings**


**Music Library: ML197.G76 2010**

By Thomas May

**Music Library: ML410.A233J65 2006**

Continued ➔
“Sacred Dissonance: John Adams’s Passion Oratorio, in Los Angeles” (2012)
By Alex Ross
Appeared in The New Yorker, June 18, 2012, pp. 84-85.
Available online at http://nyr.kr/16bHldT

The New Music Theater: Seeing the Voice, Hearing the Body (2008)
By Eric Salzman


Suggested Listening

The Death of Klinghoffer
By John Adams
This is the composer’s second major opera dealing with the takeover of the vessel Achille
Lauro by Palestinian terrorists.
Music Library: 5717 mus

El Dorato
By John Adams
A large scale orchestral composition in three movements dealing with the European conquest
of the New World.
Music Library: 7329 mus

El Nino
By John Adams
An oratorio retelling the nativity of the Christ child.
Music Library: 9285 mus

On the Transmigration of Souls
By John Adams
A deeply felt orchestral composition with sounds dealing with the tragedy of bombing of the
twin towers in New York City.
Music Library: 17711 mus

The Wound-Dresser and Fearful Symmetries
By John Adams
A song cycle using Walt Whitman’s poems and an orchestral composition inspired by William
Blake’s poem of the same name.
Music Library: 7637 mus