



LOS ANGELES PHILHARMONIC: **Dudamel Conducts Adams** USC LIBRARIES RESOURCE GUIDE

Sunday, March 10, 2013, Walt Disney Concert Hall, Los Angeles

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 Darío.

Recommended Readings

Modern Music and After (2010)

By Paul Griffith New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.

Music Library: M L197.G76 2010

The John Adams Reader: Essential Writings on an American Composer (2006)

By Thomas May

Music Library: M L410.A233J65 2006

“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

Music Library: ML1706.S26 2008

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: 5717mus

El Dorato

By John Adams

A large scale orchestral composition in three movements dealing with the European conquest of the New World.

Music Library: 7329mus

El Nino

By John Adams

An oratorio retelling the nativity of the Christ child.

Music Library: 9285mu

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: 17711mus

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: 7637mus