

Monday Evening, December 10, 2018, at 7:30

The Juilliard School

presents

Juilliard Orchestra

John Adams, *Conductor*

KAIJA SAARIAHO (b. 1952) ***Ciel d'hiver* (2013)**

JOHN ADAMS (b. 1947) ***Doctor Atomic Symphony* (2007)**

The Laboratory

Panic

Trinity

Intermission

JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833–97) **Symphony No. 4 in E minor, Op. 98 (1884–85)**

Allegro non troppo

Andante moderato

Allegro giocoso

Allegro energico e passionato

Performance time: approximately 1 hour and 35 minutes, including an intermission

The taking of photographs and the use of recording equipment are not permitted in this auditorium.

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Alice Tully Hall

*Please make certain that all electronic devices
are turned off during the performance.*

Notes on the Program

by Thomas May

***Ciel d'hiver* (2013)**

KAIJA SAARIAHO

Born October 14, 1952, in Helsinki, Finland

Currently resides in Paris

"There was always one wise old guy with a bald head, the male authority whose aesthetics or politics ruled ... I felt squeezed to be something I'm not," Kaija Saariaho once remarked, referring to the culture of her native Finland—with the imposing, patriarchal figure of (the very bald) Jean Sibelius clearly in mind. Growing up in a family that was not particularly interested in music, she nevertheless found herself as a child drawn to the wondrous worlds that could be evoked by sounds and, despite a sexist environment, became the only woman in the class of Paavo Heininen at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki. Heininen belonged to the modernist generation reacting against Sibelius, while, for her part, Saariaho joined up with fellow composers Esa-Pekka Salonen, Magnus Lindberg, and others in an experimental collective known as *Korvat Auki!* ("Ears Open!")—a society intended to encourage experimentalism.

Like those compatriots, Saariaho chose a life of exile, resettling in Paris in the early 1980s and finding a new artistic home at Pierre Boulez's IRCAM Institute for musical research after discovering the advances of the French spectralists. Spectralism refers to the processes developed by a loosely associated group of composers such as Gérard Grisey and Tristan Murail. They devoted attention to the behavior of sonic spectra, using computer-assisted spectral analysis of sound. Some of Saariaho's compositions also employ microtonality and electronic sources or "extensions" to

create timbres that subtly mix with those produced by acoustic instruments.

This spectralist background, however, is only one dimension of the unique aesthetic that Saariaho has developed. "Rich timbral nuances, focused musical material evolving into unique musical forms as well as works that call for careful listening remain her musical fingerprints," writes musicologist Pirkko Moisala. Saariaho's meticulous attention to textures and resonances, to the weight of sound itself, taps into a rich potential that involves a great deal more than "color," pushing beyond conventional musical parameters.

The result is notably different from the sensuous qualities often attributed to French Impressionism. At times suggesting an austerity and sense of expansive spaces, Saariaho's music can convey a sensation of hovering as it imbues sounds and their contexts with an uncanny and ghostlike tangibility—mesmerizing mirages that shift about the listener like mobile sculptures.

Relying on a purely acoustic orchestra, *Ciel d'hiver* ("Winter Sky") is an outstanding example of Saariaho's soundscapes. It is a reworking of the second movement of *Orion*, a work for large orchestra written in 2002 for the Cleveland Orchestra. Her largest symphonic composition to date at that time, *Orion* was inspired by the mythological hunter—the mortal son of Poseidon who was made into a constellation.

Saariaho returned to this score to complete a new commission in 2013, making *Orion*'s contemplative second movement into the independent orchestral work *Ciel d'hiver*. Her unpredictable blends of timbre and nuanced effects against a seemingly static background convey sensations of transformation and timelessness alike—a contemporary music of the spheres.

Doctor Atomic Symphony (2007)

JOHN ADAMS

Born February 15, 1947, in Worcester, Massachusetts

Currently resides in the San Francisco Bay area

In November 2017 John Adams unveiled his most recent opera, *Girls of the Golden West*, at San Francisco Opera. It was for the same company that Adams had returned to writing for the opera stage, after a long hiatus, with *Doctor Atomic*, which premiered in 2005. Three years later *Doctor Atomic* became the first work by Adams to be presented at the Metropolitan Opera.

Doctor Atomic is a two-act opera that revolves around the figures involved in the first atomic bomb test during the frantic final months of the Second World War. J. Robert Oppenheimer, the physicist who directed that project, is the protagonist. The opera climaxes with the final countdown before the detonation itself, which took place in the New Mexican desert in summer 1945.

Doctor Atomic Symphony, composed in 2007, is no mere pastiche or suite of excerpts from Adams' opera. It approaches material from the opera score from a purely orchestral perspective, developing ideas according to a musical logic independent of the drama. During the opera's initial production, Adams came to realize that certain musical ideas in *Doctor Atomic's* score seemed to be cut short and remain underdeveloped as the result of practical necessity: the pace of action onstage had to take priority over what was happening in the pit.

The symphony unfolds in a single movement, subdivided into three sections. As a precedent for the sustained, single-movement structure, Adams refers to the Seventh Symphony of Sibelius—a work he

says has exerted “an immense effect on my compositional thinking.”

An apocalyptic jangle of darkly ominous, shardlike harmonies (*The Laboratory*), drawn from the opera's overture, conjures the alien environment of a nuclear landscape superimposed on the desert setting where the Trinity test is scheduled to take place. Coils of dissonance are underscored by timpani and eerie fanfares that may call the beginning of Brahms' First Symphony to mind: a secular Day of Judgment proclaimed.

Immediately after comes the longest of the Symphony's subsections (*Panic*). This music comes from the opera's nocturnal second act, just hours before the bomb is to be tested, as a powerful electrical storm whips across the desert. The potentially dire consequences of a mishap trigger grim debate among the scientists. Adams' frenzied rhythms and anxious pauses suggest varieties of nervousness.

As the men in this unrelentingly gender-segregated environment worry over the outcome of the test, Pasqualita, a Tewa Indian maid who works for the Oppenheimers, comforts the children of Oppenheimer and his wife, Kitty, with a lullaby and is reminded of the Corn Dance ceremony of the Tewa, whose ancestral home is the desert landscape about to be demolished by the explosion. (The indigenous peoples whose health was adversely affected by the testing remain, to this day, without compensation from the federal government.)

A trumpet conveys the voice of Oppenheimer in the Symphony's final section (*Trinity*). It gravitates toward a tragic, fateful D minor. The corresponding scene (which ends the opera's first act) depicts the physicist, a passionate devotee of poetry and the arts, in an agony of

self-doubt. The text comes from one of his beloved poets, John Donne (the poem that, historically, prompted Oppenheimer to name the test site “Trinity”: “Batter my heart, three-person’d God ...”). Two ideas, in different tempos, alternate: a complex rhythmic pulsation and a reflective, neo-Baroque elegy, which ends *Doctor Atomic Symphony* on a note of humanist melancholy.

Symphony No. 4 in E minor, Op. 98 (1884–85)

JOHANNES BRAHMS

*Born May 7, 1833, in Hamburg, Germany
Died April 3, 1897, in Vienna, Austria*

“I’m rather afraid that it tastes like the climate here,” Brahms wrote about his latest work-in-progress while summering in southern Austria. “The cherries don’t ripen in these parts; you wouldn’t eat them!” The slyly cautionary metaphor was apt. Despite containing some of the most impassioned, even exuberant, moments in Brahms’ entire output, the Fourth (composed in the summers of 1884 and 1885) conveys an aura of implacable tragedy. No sweetener is mixed in to palliate the harsh truths of this music. Even its brief moments of joy emerge more as jolts of surprise than relief.

What’s more, Brahms’ nature metaphor hints at the process of musical germination that permeates the score, in which complex structures blossom organically from the simplest musical seeds (or, to use today’s trendy microbiological metaphor, DNA)—but with such concentrated force, and tragic implications, that the image of life-affirming growth suggests an unresolvable, painful paradox.

The primary “seed” here—melodically and harmonically—is the interval of the third. Brahms uses it from the outset (along with its inversion as a sixth), plunging us at

once right into the heart of the matter, with no preliminaries. The first movement as a whole unfolds as varying processes of development. Brahms continually transforms and remixes his material—and in a distinctly individual way. You couldn’t mistake this for Beethovenian development (Brahms having long since overcome what was anyway an exaggerated inferiority complex). The late composer/conductor Gunther Schuller compared the complex layering of Brahmsian development here to the Fourth Symphony of Charles Ives.

For example, the subtle alterations that prepare the moment of recapitulation or that press the coda along enhance the tragic implications inherent in the main theme. However abstractly Brahms’ processes of variation can be classified, an intense physicality is built into the Fourth as well. Along with the “sighs” of the opening theme, dance impulses that emerge elsewhere tether the music to the organic, patterned rhythms of the body.

Starting with a modal horn tune with an insistent rhythmic profile, the second movement can also suggest an invitation to the dance, albeit a rather solemn one. Brahms blends instrumental timbres, developing his thematic material through contrasts of light and shade and creating stirring effects of sonic chiaroscuro.

In the third movement, *Allegro giocoso*, Brahms adds a piccolo and tinkling triangle to his soundscape—though it is only here that these instruments are employed in this remarkably economical score. The brevity of relief, framed in C major (which plays a pivotal role throughout the Fourth in relation to the tonic E minor), comes as a shock. Unlike a Beethoven scherzo, the energy of this music is organized in duple meter. Its animated—and at times outrageously comic—spirit cannot deter the inevitably tragic conclusion that follows.

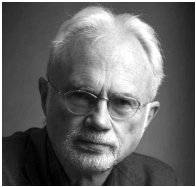
Brahms saves the grimmest music of the symphony for this finale. Like Adams, he, too, resorts to a neo-Baroque strategy, reviving the form of the passacaglia—a form that posits another kind of “developing variation” (Schoenberg’s famous phrase for Brahmsian process). Using triple meter, the passacaglia involves a series of variations that unfold over a relatively simple, constantly repeating harmonic sequence: here, it’s a mere eight chords that Brahms borrowed from the final movement of an early Bach cantata, “Nach dir, Herr, verlanget mich” (“For Thee, O Lord, I Long”).

But he never allows this strict form to turn into a formal straightjacket. Brahms

combines the predictability of the harmonic repetitions (over 30 variations plus coda) with the forward-moving dramatic sensibility of sonata form, meanwhile organizing the unfolding variations into various subgroups that can be classified on multiple levels. Out of the simple passacaglia idea grows a wild, turbulent tragedy, which Brahms concludes without consolation.

Thomas May is the English-language editor for the Lucerne Festival and writes about the arts for a wide variety of publications. His books include Decoding Wagner and The John Adams Reader.
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Meet the Artists



VERN EVANS

John Adams

John Adams’ works stand out among contemporary classical compositions for their depth of expression, brilliance of sound, and the profoundly humanist nature of their themes. Works spanning more than three decades are among the most performed of all contemporary classical music, among them *Harmonielehre*, *Shaker Loops*, *El Niño*, *Doctor Atomic*, *Nixon in China*, and *The Dharma at Big Sur*. His stage works, all in collaboration with director Peter Sellars, have transformed the genre of contemporary music theater. His opera about the California gold rush, *Girls of the Golden West*, premiered in 2017 in San Francisco. Nonesuch Records has recorded all of Adams’ music over the past 30 years: the latest are the premiere recording of the opera *Doctor Atomic*—conducted by Adams

himself—and *Scheherazade.2*, a dramatic symphony for violin and orchestra written for Leila Josefowicz. Adams also leads the world’s major orchestras in repertoire from Beethoven and Mozart to Stravinsky, Ives, Carter, Zappa, Glass, and Ellington. Conducting engagements include the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Berliner Philharmoniker, London Symphony Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Wiener Symphoniker, Orchestra dell’Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, and BBC Symphony Orchestra, as well as orchestras in Cleveland, Dallas, Cincinnati, Seattle, Miami, Baltimore, Barcelona, and Oslo. In 2017 Adams celebrated his 70th birthday with festivals of his music in Europe and the U.S., including retrospectives at London’s Barbican and Cité de la Musique in Paris, and in Amsterdam, New York, Geneva, Stockholm, Los Angeles, and San Francisco. Born and raised in New England, Adams learned the clarinet from his father and played in marching bands and community orchestras during his formative years. He began composing at age ten and his first orchestral pieces were performed while just a teenager. He is creative chair of the Los

Angeles Philharmonic. He has received honorary doctorates from Yale, Harvard, Northwestern, Cambridge, and Juilliard, and is visiting professor of composition at London's Royal Academy of Music. He is the author of the autobiography *Hallelujah Junction* and is a frequent contributor to the *New York Times Book Review*.

Juilliard Orchestra

Juilliard's largest and most visible student performing ensemble, the Juilliard Orchestra, is known for delivering polished and passionate performances of works spanning the repertoire. Comprising more than 350 students in the bachelor's and master's degree programs, the orchestra appears throughout the season in concerts on the stages of Alice Tully Hall, Carnegie Hall, David Geffen Hall, and Juilliard's Peter Jay Sharp Theater. The orchestra is a strong partner to Juilliard's other divisions, appearing in opera and dance productions,

as well as presenting an annual concert of world premieres by Juilliard student composers. The Juilliard Orchestra welcomes an impressive roster of world-renowned guest conductors this season including John Adams, Marin Alsop, Joseph Colaneri, Barbara Hannigan, Steven Osgood, and Peter Oundjian, as well as faculty members Jeffrey Milarsky, Itzhak Perlman, Matthias Pintscher, and David Robertson. The Juilliard Orchestra has toured across the U.S. and throughout Europe, South America, and Asia, where it was the first Western conservatory ensemble allowed to visit and perform following the opening of the People's Republic of China in 1987, returning two decades later, in 2008. Other ensembles under the Juilliard Orchestra umbrella include the conductorless Juilliard Chamber Orchestra, the Juilliard Wind Orchestra, and the new-music groups AXIOM and New Juilliard Ensemble.

Juilliard Orchestra

John Adams, Guest Conductor

Violin

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Ashley Jeehyun Park,
Principal Second
Zeynep Alpan
Yuki Beppu
David Bernat
Ann Sangeun Cho
Nijoma Chinyere
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Ludvig Gudim
Leerone Hakami
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Sophia Stoyanovich
Lucas Stratmann

Naoko Tajima
Agnes Tse
Katherine Woo
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Cherry Choi Tung
Yeung
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Yin-Ying Tseng,
Principal
Natalie Clarke
Hannah Geisinger
Sean Juhl
James Chanha Kang
Esther Kim
Jeremy Klein
Rosemary Nelis
Erin Pitts
Taylor Shea
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Chloe Hong, *Principal*
Chen Cao
Drew Cone
Mizuki Hayakawa

Hannah J. Kim
Sanae Kodaira
Ian Lum Hon Wah
Mark Prihodko
Tomsen Su
Mariel Werner

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Alexander
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Nina Bernat
Brittany Conrad
Janice Gho
Jacob Kolodny
Paris Myers
Andrew Sommer
Reed Tucker

Flute

Giorgio Consolati,
Principal
Emma Resmini,
Principal
Audrey Emata
Ipek Karatayioglu

Piccolo

Giorgio Consolati
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Pablo O'Connell,
Principal
Alexandra von der
Embse, *Principal*
Gabriel Young, *Principal*
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English Horn

Pablo O'Connell

Clarinet

Kamalia Freyling,
Principal
Alec Manasse, *Principal*
Lirui Zheng, *Principal*
Keeheon Nam

E-flat Clarinet

Keeheon Nam

Bass Clarinet

Lirui Zheng

Bassoon

Joshua Elmore,
Principal
Emmali Ouderkirk,
Principal
Rebecca G. Krown

Contrabassoon

Rebecca G. Krown

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