

The Richard and Barbara Debs Composer's Chair: Philip Glass



Raymond Meier

Philip Glass has been appointed to hold the Richard and Barbara Debs Composer's Chair at Carnegie Hall for the 2017–2018 season. Glass's unique music has made him a cultural icon, reaching across generations and genres—even outside the world of music. His wide-ranging collaborations with artists from every discipline—including choreographer Twyla Tharp, poet Allen Ginsberg, and filmmaker Martin Scorsese—have fascinated opera, dance, pop, and rock audiences for more than half a century. His catalogue of visionary works—known for both hypnotic and dramatic structures and shape-shifting motifs—are landmarks of a mid-century compositional movement that pivoted from serialism and atonality toward a more direct and rhythmic style.

With this residency, Carnegie Hall joins the yearlong celebration of this eminent composer's 80th birthday year, presenting performances that feature Glass classics and premieres. American Composers Orchestra dedicates a program to composers inspired by Glass, as well as his Violin Concerto No. 2, "The American Four Seasons"—Glass's musical response to Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*. The Philip Glass Ensemble and the San Francisco Girls Chorus perform his groundbreaking but rarely performed masterpiece, *Music with Changing Parts*, as part of Carnegie Hall's citywide festival *The '60s: The Years that Changed America*. In addition, notable premieres include a string quartet written by Glass for the JACK Quartet and arrangements by composer Nico Muhly of lesser-known Glass songs—both Carnegie Hall commissions.

As Glass is one of the most frequently programmed composers of our time, orchestras from across the United States were invited to submit programs that place important works by the composer in illuminating contexts. Selected, in part, by Glass himself, two orchestras emerged with very compelling programs: the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra and Pacific Symphony, both of which will make their Carnegie Hall debuts this season. Conducted by Carlos Miguel Prieto, the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra will perform *Days and Nights in Rocinha*, Glass's colorfully scored, evocative

tribute to a Rio de Janeiro *favela* known for its samba school. This program will also feature soloists Jim Atwood and Paul Yancich playing nine timpani between them in the Concerto Fantasy for Two Timpanists and Orchestra. Glass's famous collaborations with sitar master Ravi Shankar will be honored when the Pacific Symphony, led by Carl St.Clair, performs "Meetings Along the Edge" from *Passages*, a piece Glass recorded with Shankar. The orchestra also presents the New York premiere of *The Passion of Ramakrishna*, a work of quiet intensity and unforgettable power—scored for vocal soloists, chorus, and large orchestra—that pays tribute to the Hindu holy man.

Philip Glass was born in 1937 and grew up in Baltimore, Maryland. He studied at the University of Chicago, The Juilliard School, and the Aspen Music Festival and School with Darius Milhaud. He later moved to Europe, where he studied with the legendary pedagogue Nadia Boulanger (who also taught Aaron Copland, Virgil Thomson, and Leonard Bernstein), returning to New York to work closely with sitar virtuoso and composer Ravi Shankar, and study with Shankar's legendary *tabla* player Alla Rakha. In 1967, he formed the Philip Glass Ensemble—seven musicians playing keyboards and a variety of woodwinds, amplified and fed through a mixer.

The new musical style evolved by Glass was eventually dubbed “minimalism.” Glass himself never liked the term and preferred to speak of himself as a composer of “music with repetitive structures.” There has been nothing “minimalist” about his musical output. In the past 25 years, Glass has composed more than 25 operas, large and small; 11 symphonies; two piano concertos; concertos for violin, piano, timpani, and saxophone quartet and orchestra; soundtracks to films, ranging from new scores for the stylized classics of Jean Cocteau to Errol Morris’s documentary about former Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara; string quartets; and a growing body of work for solo piano and organ. He has collaborated with Paul Simon, Linda Ronstadt, Yo-Yo Ma, and Doris Lessing, among many others. He presents lectures, workshops, and solo keyboard performances around the world, and continues to appear regularly with the Philip Glass Ensemble.

Friday, December 8 at 7:30 PM | Zankel

AMERICAN COMPOSERS ORCHESTRA

George Manahan, Music Director and Conductor

Timothy Fain, Violin

Pauchi Sasaki, Electronics

ORCHESTRA UNDERGROUND: IN RESPONSE

PAUCHI SASAKI *GAMA XVI* for Orchestra and Electronics

(World Premiere, co-commissioned by Carnegie Hall)

BRYCE DESSNER *Réponse Lutosławski* (NY Premiere)

PHILIP GLASS Violin Concerto No. 2, “The American Four Seasons”

Thursday, February 8 at 7:30 PM | Zankel

NICO MUHLY AND FRIENDS INVESTIGATE THE GLASS ARCHIVE

Nico Muhly, Piano | **Estelí Gomez**, Soprano

Caroline Shaw, Vocals | **Laurie Anderson**, Violin and Vocals

Nadia Sirota, Viola | **Alex Sopp**, Flute | **Lisa Kaplan**, Piano

Chris Thompson, Percussion

LESSER KNOWN

Over his long career, Philip Glass has written countless pieces of music for his ensemble: a band of his friends and close collaborators. In world-premiere arrangements commissioned by Carnegie Hall, Nico Muhly reimagines some of Glass’s lesser-known music, performing them with his own community of musicians.

Friday, February 16 at 8 PM | Stern/Perelman

PHILIP GLASS ENSEMBLE: MUSIC WITH CHANGING PARTS

Philip Glass and the Philip Glass Ensemble

San Francisco Girls Chorus

Lisa Bielawa, Artistic Director

Additional artists to be announced

PHILIP GLASS *Music with Changing Parts*

Tuesday, February 27 at 8 PM | Stern/Perelman

LOUISIANA PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

Carlos Miguel Prieto, Music Director and Conductor

Jim Atwood, Timpani

Paul Yancich, Timpani

REVUELTAS *La noche de los Mayas*

PHILIP GLASS *Days and Nights in Rocinha*; Concerto Fantasy for Two Timpanists and Orchestra

Tuesday, March 6 at 7 PM | Zankel

SÕ PERCUSSION JACK QUARTET

PHILIP GLASS String Quartet No. 8 (US Premiere, co-commissioned by Carnegie Hall)

DONNACHA DENNEHY New Work (World Premiere, commissioned by Carnegie Hall)

DAN TRUEMAN *All Things Great and Small* (NY Premiere)

Saturday, April 21 at 8 PM | Stern/Perelman

PACIFIC SYMPHONY

Carl St.Clair, Music Director and Conductor

Anoushka Shankar, Sitar

Pacific Chorale

Robert Istad, Artistic Director

Additional artists to be announced

PHILIP GLASS “Meetings Along the Edge” from *Passages* (based on a theme by R. Shankar)

R. SHANKAR Concerto No. 3 for Sitar and Orchestra

PHILIP GLASS *The Passion of Ramakrishna* (NY Premiere)

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