

WIGMORE HALL

Saturday 8 July 2023
3.00pm

Temples of Resonance - a Philip Glass Soirée

Brooklyn Rider

Johnny Gandelsman violin
Colin Jacobsen violin
Nicholas Cords viola
Michael Nicolas cello

Philip Glass (b.1937)

Quartet Satz (2017)

String Quartet No. 5 (1991)

I. • II. • III. • IV. • V.

String Quartet No. 2 'Company' (1984)

I. • II. • III. • IV.

String Quartet No. 3 'Mishima' (1985)

*I. 1957: Award Montage • II. November 25: Ichigaya •
III. Grandmother and Kimitake • IV. 1962: Body Building •
V. Blood Oath • VI. Mishima/Closing*

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Philip Glass - Temples of Resonance

From the very first notes of our relationship with the string quartet music of Philip Glass, we felt an affinity to this inimitable musical language. The glowing resonances of his string quartets coaxed us towards a truly collective spirit as an ensemble in our formative years (and continue to do so!). Not only did the music require a total emotional investment, but it also demanded that we proceed with a heightened sensitivity to blend, transparency and tone color - as if the notation served as a kind of Rosetta Stone which it was our job to decode. Beyond the fundamental approach to the score, Glass's synergistic combination of interlocking patterns and elemental harmonies inevitably caused us to draw connections to our other spheres; whether it be the gossamer-like inner voices of Schubert, the pulsating energy of New York City, or the drone-infused textures pointing to a much wider web of musical traditions. All of this and more cemented a real commitment to this music within our collective experience.

As a quartet, we have always been heavily invested in reaching across musical genres. Philip Glass is an absolute exemplar of this type of musician. His uncanny ability to be simultaneously a composer of our time and curiously 'unstuck' from time fosters a shared appreciation of his language across an unusually wide spectrum of musical tastes. Though perhaps most widely known for his dramatic scores to such iconic films as *The Hours*, *Kundun*, *Mishima*, and *Koyaanisqatsi*, as well as for his operatic works, namely *Einstein on the Beach*, *Satyagraha* and *Akhmaten*, the string quartets represent some of his most dynamic and personal compositions.

Quartet Satz (2017), commissioned by the Kronos Quartet's '50 for the Future' project, represents one of the composer's most recent works for the string quartet genre.

Glass's **String Quartet No. 5** (1991) is in many ways the most formally substantial of his string quartets, creating an arc-like, cyclical experience from beginning to end. With its pulsating waves of dramatic energy, strong melodic development and striking contrasts, this quartet manages to challenge the traditional borders of minimalism while remaining firmly within the composer's inimitable language.

The four short movements of Glass's **String Quartet No. 2 'Company'** (1984) were scored originally as music to accompany the dramatisation of a Samuel Beckett prose poem entitled *Company*. The poem itself is a soliloquy in which a man hears a voice from his past and comes to terms with a profound feeling of solitude. The music stands out for its brevity, sense of silence, and the palindrome-like development of the phrase structure.

The six interconnected movements of **String Quartet No. 3 'Mishima'** (1985) were assembled by pulling together material from the composer's own score to a Paul Schrader film about Yukio Mishima, one of Japan's most treasured literary figures of the 20th Century who committed ritual suicide after a failed *coup d'état*.

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