

**Steven Schick, Music Director  
David Chase, Choral Director  
Thomas Nee, Music Director Emeritus**

**Mandeville Auditorium  
Saturday, November 3, 2007, 8 P.M.  
Sunday, November 4, 2007, 3 P.M.**

---

---

**JOHN LUTHER ADAMS    *The Light That Fills the World***

**PHILIP GLASS**

**Cello Concerto**

*Movement I    quarter-note=112*

*Movement II    quarter-note=96*

*Movement III    quarter-note=96*

Wendy Sutter, cellist

American Premiere

INTERMISSION

**LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN    *Symphony No. 4 in B-flat Major, Opus 60***

*Adagio; Allegro vivace*

*Adagio*

*Allegro vivace*

*Allegro ma non troppo*

## **Program Notes by Dr. Eric Bromberger**

### **The Light That Fills the World**

JOHN LUTHER ADAMS

Born January 23, 1953, Meridian, Mississippi

John Luther Adams graduated from CalArts in Valencia and then made a curious choice for a young composer intent on developing a career: in 1978 he moved to Alaska, far from the mainstream of American concert life, and he has made his life and career as a composer in that state. John Luther Adams (who is not to be confused with John Coolidge Adams, composer of *Shaker Loops*, *Nixon in China*, and *Harmonielehre*) has been described as “an environmental composer,” which may be a slippery term. While Adams sometimes makes use of native Alaskan musical materials, he has been more concerned musically with Alaska as a natural force: its harshness, its variety, its natural rhythms. He has said: “My music has always been profoundly influenced by the natural world and a strong sense of place. Through sustained listening to the subtle resonances of the northern soundscape, I hope to explore the territory of ‘sonic geography’—that region between place and culture . . . between environment and imagination.”

Adams wrote *The Light That Fills the World* in 1999. The score prints the composer’s own program note:

For much of the year, the world in which I live is a vast, white canvas.

Last winter, reading art critic John Gage’s essay “Color As Subject,” I was struck by the equivalence between the view out my window and Mark Rothko’s use of white in his paintings. The exquisite colors on the snow and those in Rothko’s translucent fields suggested to me broad diatonic washes suffused with slowly-changing chromatic harmonies. Slowly, faintly, I began to hear a new music stripped to its most essential elements: harmony, timbre and texture, suspended in what Morton Feldman called “time undisturbed.”

The ideal of the sublime landscape has long been an obsessive metaphor for my work. But the resonances of my recent musical landscapes are more internal, a little less obviously connected with the external world. If in the past the melodic elements of the music have somehow spoken of my own subjective presence in the landscape, in the newer music there are no sharply-defined lines—only slowly-changing colors on a timeless white field. All the edges are blurred. Individual sounds are diffused into a continuous texture, with a minimum of what the art critics call “incident.” All the sounds meld into one unbroken aural horizon. Harmony and color become one with space and time.

Listening to these “allover” textures, it’s difficult to concentrate for long on a single sound. The music wants to move us beyond syntactical meaning, even beyond images, into the experience of listening within an enveloping whole, a transpersonal presence. These seemingly-static fields of sound embrace constant change. But rather than moving on a journey through a musical landscape, the experience of listening is more like sitting in the same place as the wind and weather, the light and shadows slowly change. The longer we stay in one place, the more we notice change.

*The Light That Fills the World* was written in late winter and early spring when—following the long darkness of winter—the world is still white and filled with new light. If the unrelenting texture of this music embodies stasis, I hope its prevalent tone evokes the ecstatic.

The title of the piece is borrowed from an Inuit song which sings of the close relationship between beauty and terror, risk and revelation.

John Luther Adams  
Fairbanks, Alaska—August 1999

My fears,  
those small ones  
that I thought so big,  
for all the vital things  
I had to get and to reach.

When, in fine weather,  
I drifted out too far in my kayak  
And thought myself in danger.

And yet there is only  
one great thing,  
the only thing:

To live to see in huts and on journeys  
the great day that dawns,  
and the light that fills the world.

–Inuit song

### **Concerto for Cello and Orchestra**

PHILIP GLASS

Born January 31, 1937, Baltimore

Philip Glass' *Cello Concerto* was commissioned by William and Rebecca Krueger for Julian Lloyd Webber on the occasion of the cellist's fiftieth birthday. Webber gave the first performance at the Beijing Music Festival on October 21, 2001, with Long Yu conducting the China Philharmonic Orchestra. The concerto receives its American premiere at these performances.

Audiences automatically identify Philip Glass as a "minimalist" composer, but the *Cello Concerto* is not minimalist music. To be sure, it shows some of the characteristics of Glass' minimalist scores: repeated phrases (much of the concerto is built on four-bar phrases), pulsing energy, shimmering textures, moments of hypnotic power. But Glass' *Cello Concerto* is based on very traditional models. It is in the usual three-movement structure, and those movements are in the expected fast-slow-fast sequence: dramatic outer movements frame a central lyrical movement. It features a virtuoso cello part: the soloist plays virtually throughout this half-hour concerto and must project a part that ranges from a grand, dramatic manner to moments of quiet lyricism. Glass, however, does not employ such traditional forms as the sonata-structure and rondo typical of concertos. Instead, all three movements of the concerto are subdivided into shorter episodes, often at different speeds, and Glass does not provide Italian performance markings for his movements and sections, choosing instead to use only metronome markings.

One powerful theme dominates this concerto: the solo cello presents this long, recitative-like idea in the opening measures, and it will return at key moments in the course of the work. Firm and declarative, this opening sets the tone for the opening movement (and for the entire concerto). The soloist also announces the lyric second subject, shared with solo winds, and these two ideas will form the basis of this movement, which passes through several grand climaxes before the solo cello offers a reprise of the opening recitative and the movement glides to a quiet

close.

Longest of the movements, the second opens with the orchestra's pulsing, syncopated introduction, and the cello picks up that idea as it enters. This movement is often rhapsodic in character, and right at the center comes what can only be called a Big Tune, flowing and melodic. The concerto's opening recitative returns at the beginning of the finale, and gradually this accelerates to the violins' grand waltz. This waltz-theme alternates with a number of episodes enlivened by asymmetric meters (the 3/4 of the waltz is set off by extended passages in 7/8 and 9/8) before the *Cello Concerto* gathers force and rushes to its emphatic close.

### **Symphony No. 4 in B-flat Major, Opus 60**

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

Born December 16, 1770, Bonn

Died March 26, 1827, Vienna

Over the second half of 1803, Beethoven composed his *Third Symphony*, the *Eroica*, and that white-hot symphony redefined what music might be. No longer was it a polite entertainment form—now it became a vehicle for the most serious and dramatic expression. Even as he was revising the *Eroica*, Beethoven began to have ideas for a new symphony, of similar scope and set in C minor, and he made some sketches for it. But he set these plans aside to take on another musical project based on the idea of heroism, the opera *Leonore* (later renamed *Fidelio*). *Leonore* occupied Beethoven for nearly two years, and it was not until 1806 that he had seen the opera through its premiere and revision.

In the summer of 1806 Beethoven accompanied his patron Prince Karl Lichnowsky to the prince's summer palace at Troppau in Silesia. That September, composer and prince paid a visit to the nearby castle of another nobleman, Count Franz von Oppersdorff. The count was a musical enthusiast almost without equal: he maintained a private orchestra at his castle and would hire new staff for the castle only if they played an instrument and could also play in his orchestra. During that visit, the orchestra performed Beethoven's *Second Symphony*, and the count commissioned a new symphony from the composer: Beethoven would receive 500 florins, and in return Oppersdorff would get the dedication, the first performance, and exclusive rights to the music for six months. Beethoven returned to Lichnowsky's palace and set to work on the symphony, but he did not use his sketches for a symphony in C minor. Instead, he composed his *Fourth Symphony* from completely new material.

Beethoven's business dealings could sometimes be slippery, and so they were now. The composer got his 500 florins, but all Oppersdorff got in return was the dedication—Beethoven went ahead and had the *Fourth Symphony* premiered in Vienna on March 7, 1807, at a private concert that also saw the premiere of the *Coriolan Overture* and the *Fourth Piano Concerto*. Only after the *Fourth Symphony* had been premiered did Beethoven return to the sketches for a symphony in C minor he had made right after completing the *Eroica*. We know it today as the *Symphony No. 5 in C Minor*, begun before but completed after the *Fourth Symphony*.

The *Fourth Symphony* has inevitably been overshadowed by the titanic symphonies on either side of it, a relationship best captured in Schumann's oft-quoted description of the *Fourth* as "a slender Greek maiden between two Nordic giants." The *Fourth* does seem at first a relaxation, a retreat from the path blazed by the *Eroica*. Some have been ready to consider the *Fourth* a regression, and others have specifically identified the influence of Haydn on it: the symphony opens with the sort of slow introduction Haydn often used, it has a minuet for its third movement, and it employs the smallest orchestra of any Beethoven symphony (it has only one flute part). But Beethoven's *Fourth Symphony* is only superficially Haydnesque, and we need to be careful not to underestimate this music—the *Fourth* has a concentrated structure and enough energy that it achieves some of the same things as the *Fifth*, though without the darkness at the heart of that mighty symphony.

The originality of the *Fourth Symphony* is evident from its first instant—the key signature may say B-flat major, but the symphony opens in B-flat minor. Everything about this *Adagio* introduction feels strange. Not only is it in the wrong key, but soon it seems to be in no clear key at all. It is hard to make out any thematic material or direction. And the pace of this uncertainty is very slow—in his study of Beethoven's symphonies, Richard Osborne quotes Carl Maria von Weber's derisive review of this opening: "Every quarter of an hour we hear three or four notes. It is exciting!" Yet Beethoven knows what he's about, and he does the same thing in the introduction to his *String Quartet in C Major, Opus 59, No. 3*, written at exactly the same time: both works begin in a tonal fog, but those mists blow away with the arrival of the main body of the movement, marked *Allegro vivace* in both symphony and quartet.

That transition is done beautifully in the *Fourth Symphony*. As the music approaches the *Allegro vivace*, huge chords lash it forward, and when the main theme leaps out brightly, we recognize it as simply a speeded-up version of the slow introduction. That shape, so tentative at

the very beginning, takes a variety of hard-edged forms in the main body of the movement: it becomes the second theme as well, presented by bassoon and other solo woodwinds, and it also forms an accompaniment figure, chirping along happily in the background. This is a substantial movement (much longer than the first movement of the *Fifth*), and it drives to a powerful close.

The *Adagio* may be just as original. It opens not with a theme but with an accompaniment: the second violins' dotted rhythms (outlining the interval of a fourth) will tap into our consciousness all the way through this movement. First violins sing the main theme, which Beethoven takes care to mark *cantabile*. Hector Berlioz's comments on this melody may seem a little over the top, but they do speak to its air of great calm: "the being who wrote such a marvel of inspiration as this movement was not a man. Such must be the song of the Archangel Michael as he contemplates the world's uprising to the threshold of the empyrean." The second subject, of Italianate ease, arrives in the solo clarinet and preserves some of this same atmosphere. Throughout, Beethoven continually reminds the orchestra to play not just *cantabile* but also *espressivo*, *dolce*, and *legato*. At the close, solo timpani very quietly taps out the movement's accompaniment rhythm one final time before the movement concludes on two surprisingly fierce chords.

Beethoven may have marked the third movement *Minuetto*, but that was a misjudgment. This is in every way a scherzo: its outer sections are full of rough edges and blistering energy, and its witty trio is built on a rustic woodwind tune spiced with saucy interjections from the violins. This movement has an unusual structure: Beethoven brings the trio back for a second appearance (the structure is ABABA) and drives it to a fun close—two horns attempt a fanfare of their own but are cut off when Beethoven brings down the guillotine blade of the full orchestra.

Out of that emphatic ending, the finale bursts to life, and it goes like a rocket. This movement may be in sonata form, but it feels like a perpetual-motion with a basic pulse of racing sixteenth-notes that hardly ever lets up. There is some relaxed secondary material along the way, but even this is at high speed, and finally the movement races to a grand pause. Out of that silence Beethoven slows the movement almost to a crawl (the perpetual-motion theme feels as if it has become stuck in glue), then suddenly releases it, and lower strings rush the symphony to its powerful concluding chords.