

**Monday, June 2, 2003**

**An Evening with Philip Glass**

**Slee Sinfonietta**

*David Felder, Artistic Director*

*Magnus Mårtensson, conductor*

**Slee Concert Hall, 8pm**

**Pre-concert performance in Slee Lobby, 7:40pm:**

**Piece in the Shape of a Square (1967)**

*Cheryl Gobbetti Hoffman and Sabatino Scirri, flutes*

**PROGRAM**

**Symphony No. 3 (1995)**

*Movement I*

*Movement II*

*Movement III*

*Movement IV*

**A brief conversation with Philip Glass**

Screenings of the film *Naqoyqatsi*, with music composed by Mr. Glass, will be shown at the CFA Screening Room at 6:00 p.m. and 9:30 p.m. One complimentary ticket for either of these screenings is available **BY RESERVATION ONLY** to patrons of tonight's concert.

Tickets to the film will not be sold separately!

**Slee Sinfonietta**

**Violin I**

Movses Pogossian

Clemens Merkel

Linda Quan

Caleb Burhans

Orhan Ahiskal

Ralph Allen

**Violin II**

Nadia Francavilla

Courtney Orlando

Yuki Numata

Chris Otto

Sharon Gunderson

**Viola**

Stéphanie Bozzini

Justin Caulley

Adrienne Elisha

Maria Boncaldo

**Cello**

Mary Artmann

Jonathan Golove

Ted Mook

Isabelle Bozzini

**Bass**

Christopher Butler

Steve Gilewski

## PROGRAM NOTES

### *Piece in the Shape of a Square ... Philip Glass*

(...) Soon after returning to New York in 1967, the opportunity came. I met Jonas Mekas at a party at the home of James Teeney, a well-known authority on the music of Edgar Varèse and a composer much admired in his own right. At that moment, I'm sure Jonas didn't know a note of my work, but when I described the music I was writing, he immediately invited me to give a concert at the Film-Makers Cinemateque. And so, in September 1968, my new music had its New York debut. It was, by the way, my personal debut as well.

The program that evening comprised solo pieces and duets written over the preceding two years for the few people interested in performing my work at the time: a small group including saxophonist Jon Gibson, violinist Dorothy Pixley-Rothschild and, of course, myself. All the music was written in a style very similar to my theater music. I played a duet with Jon Gibson. I also played a solo piece. So did Jon.

The whole concert was conceived as a visual, as well as musical, presentation. The scores were printed and bound together in accordion-fold fashion so they could be opened up, unfolded and set up in geometrical constructions that echoed their titles. For example, when Dorothy was playing *Strung Out*, a solo for amplified violin, the music was tacked onto the wall, running about fifteen feet before taking a right turn out from the wall and forming an L-shape. Thus the title meant (1) that the music was strung out along the wall; (2) that it had to do with the idea of stringing a violin; and (3) it played on the current colloquialism of being "strung out", i.e., at the end of one's tether, of being dragged to the very edge of something.

There was another piece, *Piece in the Shape of a Square*, a play on the title of Erik Satie's *Music in the Form of a Pear*. This piece was set up in a big square, each side about ten feet long. On the inside was tacked Jon's flute part; on the outside, my own flute part. We began to play, walking in opposite directions around the square, and we came to the end of the piece at our starting point. The music was amplified with contact microphones, giving the performers total freedom of movement, but with the sound physically located by the loudspeakers.

It was a very conceptual concert. A very neat concert. And it was both visual and musical. The audience was mostly artists, about 120 people which, in the little Film-Makers Cinemateque, made the place seem *packed*. It was considered very successful but, more important, these were 120 very enthusiastic people. The music meant something to them in terms of their own aesthetics, something they were familiar with. (...)

- Excerpted from the book *Music by Philip Glass*, da Capo Press, New York; edited by Robert T. Jones (pp. 20-21)

### *Symphony No. 3 ... Philip Glass*

Dennis Russell Davies, the new music director of the Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra, asked for music specifically for the ensemble. The only suggestion he made, however, was an important one. Since there are 19 string players, he asked me to think about a piece using them all as individual (or solo) players.

The work fell naturally into a four-movement form and even given the nature of the ensemble and solo writing, seems to have the structure of a true symphony, though in the core it is the symphony for strings.

The opening movement, a quiet, moderately paced piece, functions as prelude to movements two and three, which are the main body of the symphony. The second movement mode of fast-moving compound meters explores the textures from unison to multi-harmonic writing for the whole ensemble. It ends when it moves without transition to a new closing theme, mixing a melody and pizzicato writing. The third movement is in the form of a chaconne, a repeated harmony sequence. It begins with three celli and four violas, and with each repetition new voices are added until, in the final movement, all 19 players have been woven into the music. The fourth movement, a short finale, returns to the closing theme of the second movement, which quickly re-integrates the compound meters from earlier in that movement. A new closing theme is introduced to bring the symphony to its conclusion.

– Philip Glass

## ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

Born in Baltimore, Maryland on January 31, 1937, **Philip Glass** discovered music in his father's radio repair shop that carried a line of records in addition to servicing radios. At six, Glass began music lessons and at eight, took up the flute. But by the time he was 15, he became frustrated with the flute's limited repertoire as well as with musical life in post-war Baltimore. At 19, Glass graduated from the University of Chicago with majors in mathematics and philosophy. Determined to become a composer, he moved to New York and attended the Julliard School. By then he had abandoned the 12-tone techniques he had been using in Chicago and began gravitating toward American composers like Aaron Copeland and William Schuman.

By 23, Glass had studied with Vincent Persichetti, Darius Milhaud and William Bergsma. Rejecting serialism, Glass preferred such maverick composers as Harry Partch, Charles Ives, Moondog, Henry Cowell and Virgil Thomson – but still had not found his own voice. He then moved to Paris and spent two years of intensive study under Nadia Boulanger.

In Paris, he was hired by a filmmaker to transcribe the Indian music of Ravi Shankar into notation readable to western musicians. In the process, he discovered the techniques of Indian music. After researching music in North Africa, India and the Himalayas, he returned to New York, renouncing his previous music, and applying eastern techniques to his own work. By 1974, Glass had composed a large collection of new music for both the Mabou Mines Theater Company that Glass co-founded and for his own performing group, the Philip Glass Ensemble. This period culminated in *Music in 12 Parts*, a three-hour summation of Glass' new music. In 1976 Glass reached an apogee in his collaboration with Robert Wilson, creating the opera *Einstein on the Beach*, a five-hour epic that is now seen as a landmark in 20th century music-theater. Glass then decided to make *Einstein* part of a trilogy that resulted in the creation of the operas *Satyagraha* and *Akhnaten*.

Glass has also collaborated with a variety of artists on projects ranging from opera: *Satyagraha*, *Akhnaten*, *The Making of the Representative for Planet 8* (libretto by Doris Lessing), *The Fall of the House of Usher*, *Hydrogen Jukebox* (libretto by Allen Ginsberg), and *The Voyage* (libretto by David Henry Hwang); to film scores: *Koyaanisqatsi*, *Mishima*, *Powaqqatsi*, *The Thin Blue Line*, *A Brief History of Time*, *Candyman*, and *Dracula*. His repertoire also includes a variety of dance pieces including *A Descent into the Maelstrom* and *In the Upper Room* (choreographed by Twyla Tharp); and such unclassifiable theatre pieces as: *The Photographer*, *1000 Airplanes on the Roof* (libretto by David Henry Hwang), *The Mysteries* and *What's so Funny?*, *Orphée*, *La Belle et La Bête* and *Les Enfants Terribles* (a trilogy of musical theater pieces based on the films of Jean Cocteau).

Additionally, Glass has worked on cooperative recording projects such as *Songs from Liquid Days* (Lyrics by David Byrne, Paul Simon, Laurie Anderson, and Suzanne Vega), *Passages* (co-written with Ravi Shankar); and orchestral works including: *Itaipu* (a large-scale work for chorus and orchestra), *the Low* and *Heroes Symphonies* (both based on the music of David Bowie and Brian Eno), and *Symphony No. 5 – Requiem*, *Bardo*, and *Nirmanakaya* (a large scale work for chorus, voice, and orchestra).

Critically acclaimed film scores include: *Kundun*, directed by Martin Scorsese (1998 LA Critics Award, Academy, Golden Globe, and Grammy nomination for Best Original Score) and original music for *The Truman Show* directed by Peter Weir (1999 Golden Globe Award for Best Score). Glass recently completed several new projects that will premiere in 2002 including: *Symphony No. 6 (Plutonium Ode)*, text by Allen Ginsberg commissioned in honor of Philip Glass's 65th Birthday by The Carnegie Hall Corporation and Brucknerhaus Linz; film scores for *Naqoyqatsi*, the third part of the Glass/Reggio Trilogy and *The Hours*, produced by Scott Rudin and directed by Stephen Daldry; *Galileo, Galilei*, an opera adapted from the life of Galileo; and a *Concerto for Harpsichord and Chamber Orchestra*, commissioned for the Northwest Chamber Orchestra by Charles C. and Diana Carey.

**The Slee Sinfonietta** was formed in 1996 by composer David Felder and conductor Magnus Mårtensson. This ensemble, the professional chamber orchestra in residence at UB, performs a series of concerts each year devoted to lesser known repertoire, particularly that of the pre-classic era and the most recent contemporary music. Advanced students in performance are invited to participate along with faculty artists, soloists, and regional professionals in the production of these unique concerts designed to contribute new possibilities for concertgoers within the University and the Western New York region. We hope to introduce new repertoire to audiences of all kinds performed at the highest level, and we invite listeners to join with us in the exploration of these newer musical worlds available to us at the beginning of the twenty-first Century.

**Magnus Mårtensson**, born in 1966, studied piano, voice, conducting and composition at Malmö Musikhögskola and conducting at the Cleveland Institute of Music. Between 1989 and 1992 he was conductor of Opera Semplice in Malmö as well as the Santa Cecilia Oratorio Society of Lund. During this time he also founded and conducted, in numerous performances, the Malmö Chamber Orchestra. From 1995 to 1996 he held the position as conductor of the Contemporary Music Ensemble at the Cleveland Institute of Music and has since 1996 served as conductor at SUNY Buffalo. Mårtensson also appears with orchestras and ensembles in Europe and South America, and has made several recordings, among others, with works by David Felder. A champion of new music, Mårtensson has premiered over 200 works.

Also active as a composer, his numerous commissions have included incidental music for theater plays, chamber music and songs. His latest work, *Before the Law*, a chamber opera in one act with libretto by Henry Sussman after Franz Kafka's *The Trial*, was premiered at UB in December of 1997.