

David Lang

Biography

Passionate, prolific, and complicated, composer David Lang embodies the restless spirit of invention. Lang is at the same time deeply versed in the classical tradition and committed to music that resists categorization, constantly creating new forms. In the words of *The New Yorker*, "With his winning of the Pulitzer Prize for *the little match girl passion* (one of the most original and moving scores of recent years), Lang, once a postminimalist enfant terrible, has solidified his standing as an American master."

Many of Lang's pieces resemble each other only in the fierce intelligence and clarity of vision that inform their structures. His catalogue is extensive, and his opera, orchestra, chamber and solo works are by turns ominous, ethereal, urgent, hypnotic, unsettling and very emotionally direct. Much of his work seeks to expand the definition of virtuosity in music—even the deceptively simple pieces can be fiendishly difficult to play and require incredible concentration by musicians and audiences alike.

the little match girl passion, commissioned by Carnegie Hall for Paul Hillier's vocal ensemble Theater of Voices, was awarded the 2008 Pulitzer Prize for music. Of the piece, *The Washington Post's* Tim Page said, "I don't think I've ever been so moved by a new, and largely unheralded, composition as I was by David Lang's *little match girl passion*, which is unlike any music I know."

Other recent projects include *writing on water* for the London Sinfonietta, with libretto and visuals by English filmmaker Peter Greenaway; *the difficulty of crossing a field*, a fully-staged opera for the Kronos Quartet; *loud love songs*, a concerto for the percussionist Evelyn Glennie; and the oratorio *Shelter*, with co-composers Michael Gordon and Julia Wolfe, at the Next Wave Festival of the Brooklyn Academy of Music, staged by Ridge Theater and featuring the Norwegian vocal ensemble Trio Mediaeval.

Lang is one of America's most performed composers. "There is no name yet for this kind of music," wrote *Los Angeles Times* music critic Mark Swed of Lang's work, but audiences around the globe are hearing more and more of it, in performances by such organizations as Santa Fe Opera, the New York Philharmonic, the Netherlands Chamber Choir, the Boston Symphony, the Munich Chamber Orchestra, and the Kronos Quartet; at Tanglewood, the BBC Proms, The Munich Biennale, the Settembre Musica Festival, the Sidney 2000 Olympic Arts Festival and the Almeida, Holland, Berlin, and Strasbourg Festivals; in theater productions in New York, San Francisco and London; alongside the choreography of Twyla Tharp, La La La Human Steps, The Netherlands Dance

Theater and the Paris Opera Ballet; and at Lincoln Center, the Southbank Centre, Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, the Barbican Centre, and the Brooklyn Academy of Music.

Lang is the recipient of numerous honors and awards, including the Pulitzer Prize, the Rome Prize, the BMW Music-Theater Prize (Munich), and grants from the Guggenheim Foundation, the Foundation for Contemporary Performance Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York Foundation for the Arts, and the American Academy of Arts and Letters. In 1999, he received a Bessie Award for his music in choreographer Susan Marshall's *The Most Dangerous Room in the House*, performed live by the Bang on a Can All-Stars at the Next Wave Festival of the Brooklyn Academy of Music. *The Carbon Copy Building* won the 2000 Village Voice OBIE Award for Best New American Work. The recording of *The Passing Measures*, on Cantaloupe, was named one of the best CDs of 2001 by *The New Yorker*. His recent CD *Pierced*, on Naxos, was praised both on the rock music site *Pitchfork* and in the classical magazine *Gramophone*, and was called his "most exciting new work in years" by the *San Francisco Chronicle*. The CD of *the little match girl passion* will be released in June 2009 on Harmonia Mundi.

Lang is co-founder and co-artistic director of New York's legendary music festival Bang on a Can. His work has been recorded on the Sony Classical, Harmonia Mundi, Teldec, BMG, Point, Chandos, Argo/Decca, and Cantaloupe labels, among others. His music is published by Red Poppy (ASCAP) and is distributed worldwide by G. Schirmer, Inc.