

DIFFERENT
TRAINS

DIFFERENT TRAINS



THE MUSICIANS BECOME EYE-
WITNESSES, RECOUNTING WHAT THEY
SAW. WHAT MAKES A PERSON TURN
INTO A HENCHMAN OR AN ONLOOKER?
COULD ANY INDIVIDUAL POSSIBLY
PUT A STOP TO SOMETHING
THAT OUGHT TO BE IMPOSSIBLE?
PIA FORSGREN,
DIRECTOR OF THE JEWISH THEATRE



"IF YOU LISTEN CAREFULLY,
YOU WILL UNDERSTAND EVERYTHING YOU HEAR
AND YET IT WILL TAKE YOU
WHERE YOU HAVE NEVER BEEN BEFORE."

HANS GEFORS,
OPERA COMPOSER

STRAIGHT

STEVE REICH'S PIECE FLOWS FROM THE MEMORY OF TRAINS ROLLING THROUGH A DARKENED EUROPE WHILE HE, A LITTLE BOY, CROSSED THE OPEN SPACES OF AMERICA. BUT IT IS NO LAMENT, MORE A POIGNANT MUSICAL PANORAMA OVER A PERIOD OF HUMAN HISTORY WITH DESTRUCTION AS WELL AS REVOLT, ALL OF IT TO THE BEAT OF THE CLACKING RAIL JOINTS.

VIOLIN II-1

13

III.

95 $\text{♩} = 110$ 5 96 5 97 7 98

Vla. I-2:

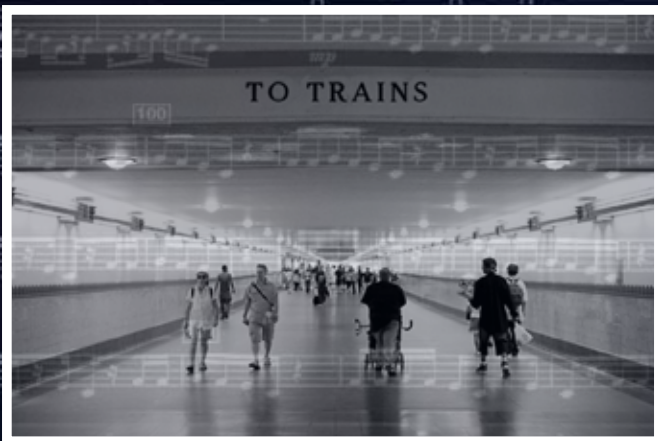
99

100

TO TRAINS

102

END 430



VIOLIN II-1

14

103 $\text{♩} = 124$ 2

mp

104

105

106

107 $\text{♩} = 111$ 2

mp. half off the string

109

110

END 430



VIOLIN II-I

7

354 [60] *mf*

358 [61]

362 [62]

366 [63] *mf*

370 [64] *mf*

375 [65] *mf*

for - ty one I guess it must have been)

378 (nine - teen for - ty one for - ty one I guess it must have been nine - teen for - ty one I guess it

381 [65] must have been) (nine - teen for - ty one for - ty one I guess it must have been.

384 nine - teen for - ty one I guess it must have been) *Allegro*



ENB 430

VIOLIN II-I

9

II.

66 *mf* *fade in* *sempre* *mp*

72 [67] *mf*

77 [68] *mf*

83 [69] *mf*

91 [70] *mf* *fade in* *mp*

98 [71] *mf*

105 [72] *mf*

112 [73] *mf*

119 [74] *mf*

122 [75] *mf*




ENB 430

VIOLIN II-1

11


139 [77] $\text{♩} = 102$
 147 *f* *fade in* *mp*
 153 [78] $\text{♩} = 158$
 161
 167
 173
 178
 185 [79]
 199
 210 [81] $\text{♩} = 99$ *ff*
 223 [82]
 232 [83] $\text{♩} = 102$ *più vibrato*
 244 [84] $\text{♩} = 86$
 ENB 430



VIOLIN II-1

12

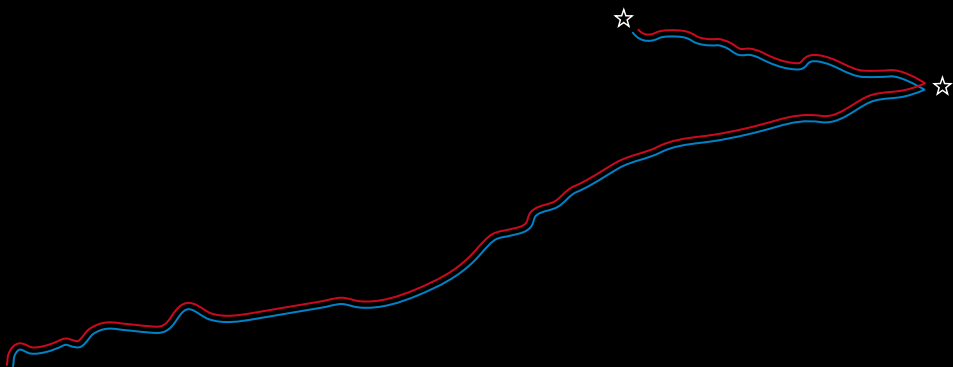
258 [85]
 265 [86] $\text{♩} = 98$
 279 [88] $\text{♩} = 86$
 290
 303 [89]
 318
 326
 335
 343 [93]
 354 [94]
 364 *dim.*
 372 *(dim.)*
 380 *(dim.)*
 400 *Allegro*
 ENB 430





TRANSCRIPT OF SPEECH RECORDINGS

I:AMERICA BEFORE THE WAR



“from Chicago to New York” VIRGINIA

“one of the fastest trains”

“The crack* train from New York” MR. DAVIS

“from New York to Los Angeles”

“different trains every time” VIRGINIA

“from Chicago to New York”

“in 1939”

“1939” MR. DAVIS

“1940”

“1941”

“1941 I guess it must’ve been” VIRGINIA

* “CRACK” IN THE OLDER SENSE OF “BEST”

II: EUROPE DURING THE WAR

A stylized map of Europe is positioned below the title. It features a yellow outline with a red border. The map is oriented with the Atlantic Ocean to the left and the Mediterranean Sea to the right. A small white star is located at the bottom right of the map, near the coast of the Mediterranean.

“1940” RACHELLA

“on my birthday”

“The Germans walked in”

“walked into Holland”

“Germans invaded Hungary” PAUL

“I was in second grade”

“I had a teacher”

“a very tall man, his hair was concretely plastered smooth”

“He said, ‘Black Crows invaded our country many years ago’”

“and he pointed right at me”

“No more school” RACHEL

“You must go away”

“and she said ‘Quick, go!’ ” RACHELLA

“and he said, ‘Don’t breathe!’ ”

“into those cattle wagons” RACHELLA

“for 4 days and 4 nights”

“and then we went through these strange sounding names”

“Polish names”

“Lots of cattle wagons there”

“They were loaded with people”

“They shaved us”

“They tattooed a number on our arm”

“Flames going up to the sky – it was smoking”

III: AFTER THE WAR

“and the war was over” PAUL

“Are you sure?”

“The war is over”

“going to America”

“to Los Angeles”

“to New York”

“from New York to Los Angeles” MR. DAVIS

“one of the fastest trains” VIRGINIA

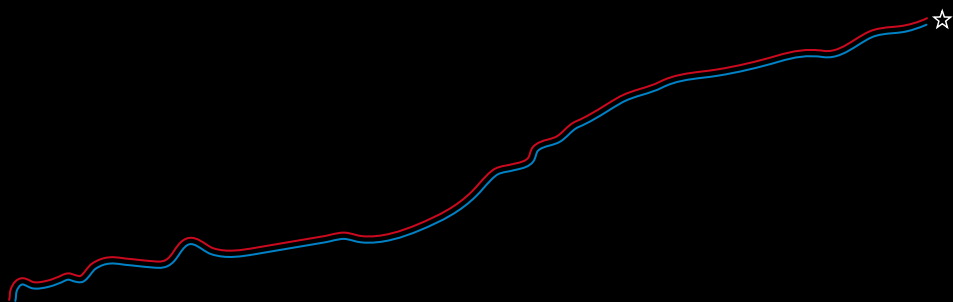
“but today, they’re all gone” MR. DAVIS

“There was one girl, who had a beautiful voice” RACHELLA

“and they loved to listen to the singing, the Germans”

“and when she stopped singing they said,

‘More, more’ and they applauded”



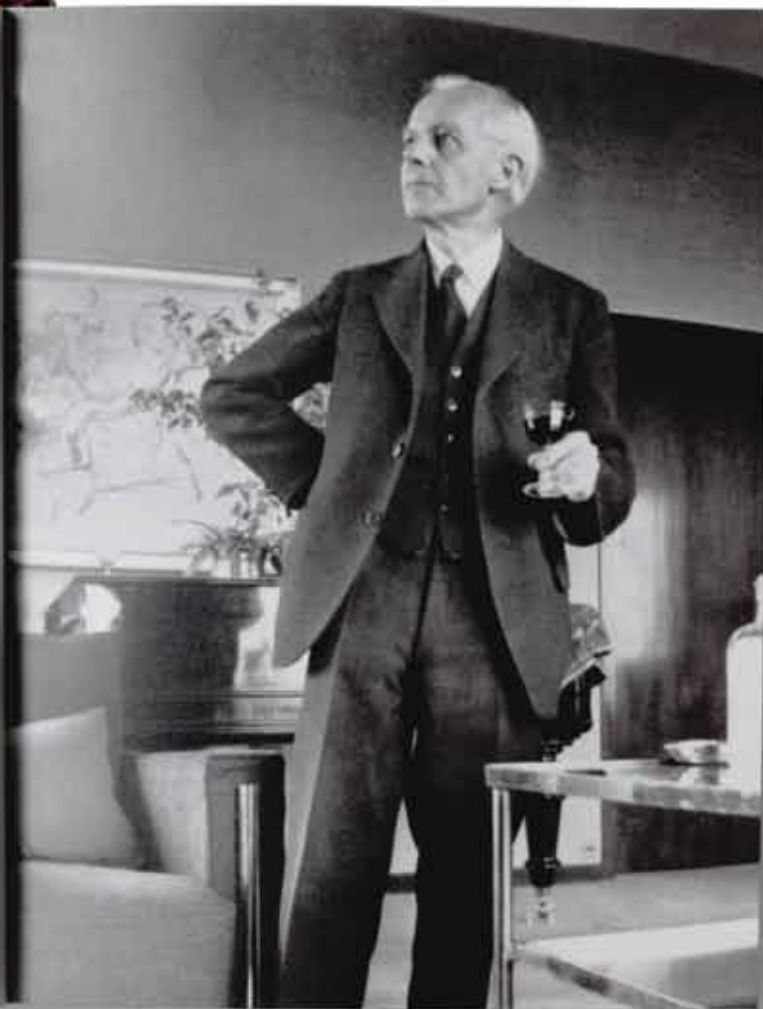


THE CREATION

FINDING HIS "ASSIGNMENT":
STEVE REICH ON THE CREATION OF DIFFERENT TRAINS.
BY JEREMY EICHLER

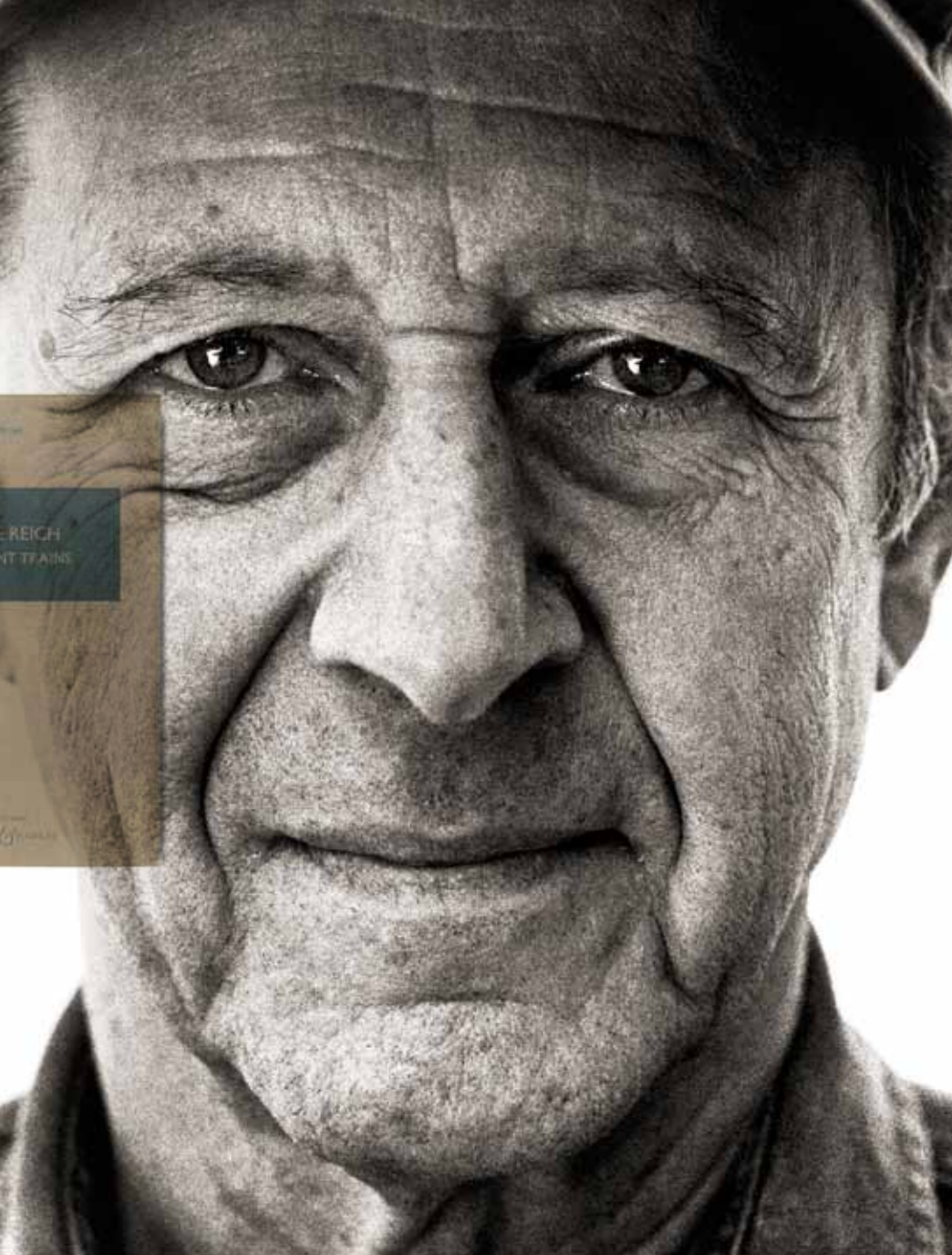


BÉLA BARTÓK
1881-1945





מדרש



The premiere of Steve Reich's Different Trains (for string quartet and tape) was given by the Kronos Quartet on November 2, 1988 in London's Queen Elizabeth Hall. The piece is performed in three connected movements: I) America — Before the War, II) Europe — During the War, III) After the War. The composer discussed his work with classical music critic Jeremy Eichler in an exclusive interview for The Jewish Theatre Stockholm.

JEREMY EICHLER: This is clearly a crucial piece in your own compositional evolution, and one of the great chamber works of the late twentieth century. Please tell me about its genesis.

STEVE REICH: It got started with Betty Freeman, the American music patron who died in 2009. She commissioned me to write a piece for Kronos. I had also just become aware of the sampling keyboard, which is, of course, a digital recorder with a piano keyboard attached to it. I hadn't done anything with tape or pre-recorded sound since 1966 with *Come Out*, so it had been a long time. I was thinking, instead of a speech melody by itself, I'd like to have a real musical instrument play that melody at the same time as you heard the voice, so that the documentary reality and the musical reality would become one thing.

EICHLER: How did you arrive at the subject matter?

REICH: At first I had no idea who was talking or what [the piece] was about. So my first thought was that it would be the voice of Bela Bartok! But in the course of preparing this, I began to think: "Wait a minute, do I want Bela Bartok sitting on my shoulder while I'm trying to write a string quartet?" I mean, it's hard enough as it is without having the superego of the greatest composer to write string quartets since Beethoven!



BELA BARTOK

Now don't ask me how, but what popped into my mind was these train trips I took as a kid between my divorced parents. My father and mother were divorced when I was one year old. My mother was a singer and a lyricist, and my father was an attorney. When they divorced my father stayed in New York City and my mother went back to Los Angeles where she was from. They arranged divided custody. The woman who took care of me, Virginia, accompanied me on these train trips....

So I started thinking about the sound of trains in American music, and then I said to myself, "Well, what years did I do this? 1937, '38, '39, '40, '41.... What was going on in the world while I was doing that? Mr. Hitler was trying to take over the world, and was trying to kill every

Jew he could get his hands on including little boys just like me.” You know that famous shot in the Warsaw ghetto with the little kid with short pants and his hands up in the air? Well, we look kind of similar. If I had been born in Düsseldorf or Brussels or Budapest, we wouldn’t be having this conversation....

EICHLER: So you did not set out to consciously write a work of “Holocaust art,” but the subject nevertheless emerged.

REICH: If someone had come up to me and said, “Hey Steve, would you write a piece about the Holocaust?” I would say, “Are you nuts? Absolutely not.” There’s no way for me or anyone else to do that. So why did I do *Different Trains*? With all the people who appear from the American side in the first movement, the idea was to interview them, listen to what they have to say, and then take those selections that were melodically and linguistically really moving and magnetic. The rule [I created for myself] is that I can take what I want, but I can’t change anything. That’s part of the ethos, because this piece is a kind of homage to the living and to the dead....

What did that mean for the Holocaust survivors? The horror that went on is totally beyond my – or anyone else’s – capability [to represent]. But if I had them just as human beings talking about their lives, in their tone of voice, then I’ve got it. I’m not trying to make a melodrama. The essence of *Different Trains* is that it’s absolutely at all times true to the documentary reality. Everything in the piece grows out of the recordings, of Virginia, of Mr. Davis, and of [the survivors] Rachella, Paul and Rachel. That’s what makes it possible.

EICHLER: For me that’s also what makes it so powerful – its sense of restraint and its faithfulness to the materials. How did you first go about gathering the recorded speech you needed?

REICH: To get the recordings, I went out to speak with Virginia who lived in Queens [New York], with my little Sony Walkman Pro. And through the friend of a friend, I got in touch with Mr. Lawrence Davis, who was a retired Pullman porter living in Washington, DC.... And I went up to Yale [University] where they have an archive of Holocaust survivors on tape. I spent a couple of days up there. I brought home all these recordings and would play them, and when I hit an [appropriate]

phrase or a sentence, I would record it into the sampling keyboard. And then I would record that sample onto a floppy disc. After several weeks of doing this, I had this series of floppy discs, and as each phrase came up I would go to the piano and my music notebook, and write down as accurately as possible the actual notes of the little phrase. At the end of a month or so or more, I had a series of melodic motives in my music notebook, and a stack of floppy discs. From there, I began composing from the beginning and went right through to the end.

EICHLER: How long did it take, and were you aware as you were writing that the piece represented a major breakthrough for you?

REICH: I think it was about a year or a little less ... and I knew it was a breakthrough because it was a new technique, a whole new way of working. I had done the tape pieces back then in ‘65-‘66, whereby speech sounded like music, but now I was writing music that incorporated speech. The melody of the speakers was exactly the melody being used. Every time a man speaks, he’s doubled by the cello. Every time a woman speaks, she’s doubled by the viola.... Another thing I did was to go to a record store in my neighborhood – back in the days when there were record stores! – and they had a bin for train sounds. I got European trains and American trains.... I listened to these and picked those that seemed most musical and appropriate to what I was doing. The first and second violins double the train whistles. In the American section, the musical content of the whistles are perfect intervals – fourths and fifths. In Europe, they’re shrieky, very high triads. And the fiddles do those, too.

EICHLER: Were you aware of Janacek’s theories of speech-melody at the time?

REICH: No, as a matter of fact, I was a complete ignoramus and didn’t know anything about Janacek [until] about a year or two after I wrote *Different Trains*. But I think the idea goes back to well before Janacek.... I think all good vocal writing is often associated with the lilt of the language as it’s used. It’s just a natural human tendency. And by the way, that is also the key to “national differences” in music. Linguistic differences are at the heart of national differences – on very obvious level, and on an unconscious level as well, I think.



LEOŠ JANÁČEK

EICHLER: What was the connection of the work to your own deepening interest in traditional Judaism and religious practice?

REICH: Like many Jews in America, I was brought up [to be very assimilated] in the 1940s in Manhattan with no Hebrew school. I realized only later that I knew nothing about Judaism.... I didn't know a word of Hebrew. I didn't know there was such a thing as a Midrash [biblical interpretation]. So like many people in the 1960s, I got involved in hatha yoga and then in pranayama – the breathing exercises – and southern Buddhist meditation, and northern Buddhist meditation. All of this, for a high-metabolism, fast-talking New Yorker, was quite useful in calming me down and focusing the mind. It gave me certain skills in how to relax when that's important to do.

But after ten years of this, when I got back to New York in the early 1970s, I began to feel that something was missing. It popped into my mind, maybe there's something in my own backyard, but I'll have to dig up the crabgrass to find it. So I made a couple of calls to various Jewish institutions in New York... [There was a] fantastic adult education program at the Lincoln Square Synagogue. My wife Beryl Korot and I met at about this time. We both studied at Lincoln Square. This was a seed that began to grow and grow. I began to put some of the theory into practice. I tried to avoid concerts on Friday nights and, you know, change my dietary habits, etc., etc. All of this, especially the observance of the Sabbath, was really clearly a positive improvement in my life.

When that kind of thing happens, and you are a composer, then sooner or later you're going to want to somehow bring that into your music. It's the way of the world. In 1980, I decided I wanted to set a Hebrew text, and the most obvious seemed to be Tehillim, the Psalms, because they're obviously sung.... That was the first move toward incorporating Judaism into my music. There are other examples, but I guess the next is *Different Trains*.

When I started what turned out to be *Different Trains* all I was interested in was the formal aspects of it, and I think that's a good thing. The content revealed itself slowly. The Holocaust is such an enormous phenomenon of such overwhelming factual and emotional reality, that in a sense it is untouchable, unless you simply reproduce a tiny little sliver of the actual event. I could never have done a piece to do with the Holocaust had it not been for the voices of the people who

were simply recounting what happened to them. And using those melodies, their melodies, as the backbone of what I was doing.

EICHLER: Over the years, have you noticed any differences in how the piece has been received in American versus European performances?

REICH: The short answer is no.... The truth is that the people who come to new music concerts in Germany are not terribly different from those who come to new music concerts in New York City. I don't know their private stories, or what their parents or grandparents were doing in the 1940s, but I get pretty enthusiastic, moved reactions pretty much everywhere. That makes me feel very good.

EICHLER: You've commented in the past that it seems like you were born to write this piece. Could you expand on that?

REICH: The fact of the matter is that musical talent doesn't come in one flavor. It's all over the map. John Adams was born to write for the orchestra. He was given certain talents. You can look at it as a divine gift, or as a genetic happenstance. I was born with a very different gift and heritage. My mother was writing popular songs. I listened to a lot of popular sources. I got involved with percussion and drums. I played non-Western music. I got involved in electronics when I was younger. Being a composer and a committed traditional Jew is not a common combination. All of these things came together in a piece like *Different Trains* in a new way for me, and in a new way for Western music. It's a kind of music theater, where the musicians are the actors. The cellist is in a sense Mr. Davis. The viola is Virginia.... So there are a lot of new ingredients in the piece, but it also just developed out of the way I had been working since I was a kid.

I think it's important for all composers – for all of us as people actually – to find out what our 'assignment' is.... From my perspective, that is something that comes from God, but the more any one of us can find out what that assignment is, and realize it, I think the better off he or she is. And maybe the better off everyone else is, in some small way.

JEREMY EICHLER,
CLASSICAL MUSIC CRITIC OF THE BOSTON GLOBE



LINCOLN SQ. SYNAGOGUE



JOHN ADAMS



PULSE

IS EVERYTHING

PIA FORSGREN
DIRECTOR OF THE JEWISH THEATRE STOCKHOLM
TALKS TO ARIS FIORETOS

ARIS FIORETOS: Your work – a visual concert where you combined Steve Reich's *Different Trains* with *Tears Apart*, an original composition you commissioned by the Fleshquartet, and installed in a room filled with glass designed by Ann Wählström – opened for the first time at The Jewish Theatre in Stockholm in 2008. What was it about *Different Trains* that attracted you?



ANN WÄHLSTRÖM

PIA FORSGREN: I had long wanted to do a set design of glass. It was an old dream. And I had been following Ann Wählström's work, which I like very much. She applies a strict minimalism, a simplicity of expression. But since she trained at the Pilchuck Glass School in Seattle, she is also schooled in – and filled with – an explosive, warm and colorful glass form. In 1999, Ann did a retrospective show at Växjö Museum. When I saw it I felt that this was a person, a form of expression, I wanted to work with. So I suggested a collaboration when I had found a suitable story. Then the years passed. All along, I also knew I wanted to create something based on the work of an American minimalist composer. I had heard the music of Terry Riley, Philip Glass and Steve Reich. I was listening to *Different Trains* one day when it suddenly struck me that this should work together with Ann's glass. There was something in his music that resounded with her work. I immediately realized that the music, and the story in it, would work together with the glass.

FIORETOS: Reich is famous for his serial compositions, in which repetitions and subtle shifts intensify and accumulate until they create bulging shapes and comprehensive structures. *Different Trains* is something of a key work, but also one of his most personal. It's the first time he uses sampled voices, for instance. He also bases it on his own experiences as a child of divorced parents – how he travelled by train from one coast to the other, back and forth between his mother and father. It appears to have been triggered by a question he only asks himself much later: "What was happening in the world at the same time as I was travelling by train across America?" As an adult, he realizes that trains of a very different kind were running in Europe at that time. If he had been a boy in Brussels or Budapest, he would very likely not have been issued a return ticket. These are the two first phases or parts of the work: before and during the war. In the former is ignorance, while in the latter there is a dawning awareness of the catastrophe. Then there is the time after the war.

Reich seeks out his old nanny and lets her recount their journeys together across the continent. These three dimensions overlap, like rails at a junction or voices in a canon. In this way, the original phrases become charged retrospectively and take on an ominous air. The time before is only available after as something that survived during the war. Incidentally, Reich also borrows voices from the Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies at Yale University, which I happen to have been involved with.

FORSGREN: In what way?

FIORETOS: I studied at Yale, and many of those of us who studied under Geoffrey Hartman or Shoshana Felman came into contact with the archive. They're the driving force behind the project, and have devoted a lot of time to literature's relationship to trauma and testimony.

FORSGREN: The archive safeguards the personal experiences. Or at least the memory of them.

FIORETOS: Recounting traumatic memories is both necessary and painful. The pain returns through the telling. It can well up as tears, lead to mental blockages and the loss of language. You probably recall the people Lanzmann talks to in his film *Shoah*. Some of them literally lose the ability to speak. They're so overcome by the past that they can only react with stammering and silence. It's as if they had been kidnapped by their experiences. Such reactions show that the past isn't over and done with, but haunts the present like a phantom. Perhaps another concept of time is needed for the experiences of war and terror, of persecution. Clearly, the trauma is not passé.

Something happens here which I think touches the core of Reich's work. Like all music, his too is based on reanimation. It brings notes to life, it evokes sounds which would otherwise be inanimate markers. At the same time, he is interested in the disruptions to this process, in how repetitions and shifts work. In one sense this is phantom music: sounds and phrases return like the ghosts of themselves. As a composer he is hardly a nostalgic, but neither is he a melancholic. It's as if he wanted to stop the pain from burrowing inward, as if he's trying to turn the pain outward and channel it until it develops its own, perhaps liberating, dynamic. You seem to work with similar means – with simultaneity and shifts, but within a fixed space.



GEOFFREY HARTMAN

FORSGREN: Glass, after all, is frozen time. I found it exciting to follow the glass making process itself. I filmed the work flow so that we could show it in the theater. Those seven minutes depict how one of Ann's big vases, or really drops, comes into being. Everything is born from this tiny bit of melted glass – through the blower's breathing, through heat and gravity. When you've produced a bubble, you turn it downward and let gravity take over. As the melted glass begins to run downward, there's a given moment when you have to go at it with a mallet to give it that creased structure. For me, this process lives on in the frozen forms.

FIORETOS: Perhaps we can talk about a trauma here? Not that glassblowing is a painful experience, but it is based on that crucial moment which only occurs under great pressure and influence on an animate form. This moment lives on, visible and ethereal in the glass, like a ghost.

FORSGREN: Through the transparency of the glass a movement continues – something which is not itself fixed. At first I wanted to work with a form Ann had made a few years ago and which she called Soapbubbles. It has a large, round bowl and a long, narrow neck. I wanted to fill the theater with these forms, so that the audience would be seated amid glass. It would be very physical, very bodily. And big and powerful. It's quite unusual for hand-blown glass to have such enormous dimensions, but Ann found a glassworks in the Czech Republic which made laboratory glass and might be able to produce them. We went down there and she did a trial blowing. It was a bold venture that succeeded. I wanted the shapes to be abstract and yet recognizable. I wasn't actually thinking of tears originally. But when I'd invited the Fleshquartet they started talking about tears. And it fits. For me, *Different Trains* is an elegy. I was aiming for a beauty of interpretation which would collide with one of the biggest experiences of suffering in the history of mankind.

FIORETOS: Glass has that dual character. It can be tremendously beautiful, but at the same time it is a cold material. In that way it certainly evokes memory – memory, too, being transparent. In its fragile way, it gives us access to what has been experienced, yet we can't touch it. Its inside remains masked in the visible, an open secret.



"GLASS, AFTER ALL, IS FROZEN TIME."

PIA FORSGREN

FORSGREN: At first the whole project was called “Transparency,” actually....

FIORETOS: When was the title dropped?

FORSGREN: When we did the lighting, I had decided to use dynamic varied lighting, but I also wanted to set out from a completely dark space. This meant that I had yet another factor, which may have to do with what you’ve just said about time and memory. When the light plays it’s never as if it’s something finished – it’s ongoing, here and now, at least until you pull the plug out of the socket. That was important. The glass would not be solitary, but would always be enveloped by a certain energy. For me, I think, this also has to do with the question about what sort of energy there is in thinking – about what powers us.

Different Trains has an enormous power. Reich pushes on with evocative sounds of trains, like whistles. The bowing itself is even reminiscent of the pounding against rails and some kind of perpetual motion machine. I wanted this pulsating to collide with the static space, to make time and volume collide. Reich’s fierce attack, his relentless way of rendering the story, would strike the glass – but without shattering it. Inside us, though, it might shatter. That’s why it’s important that the music is played loudly and that a live orchestra is seated in the middle of the space. You need to see the bodies working. It must be clear how the four men are tearing at their bows, how making music is heavy physical work. The living, characterizing element is man. I decided at an early stage that the musicians would be wearing uniforms. I wanted them to function as company for the young Steve, or witnesses – but also to evoke the prisoners who were forced to play for the Germans in Theresienstadt. I wanted to stir all these associations and let the audience choose their own interpretation. The musicians have to remain individuals with a gaze, with a present. This is what constitutes the visual concert. Reich has provided detailed instructions for how he wants it to be done. He wants three layers of the Kronos Quartet recording to be mixed with whistles and voices. Then there’s a live quartet on top of it all. Reich himself refers to “musical theater” and seems to regard the musicians partly as actors.

FIORETOS: Have you turned The Jewish Theatre into a railroad station? To my ears it sounds like Reich’s canon voices steam into

the station platform at the Royal Djurgården park, stop, and then steam on. The black space has something of the platform about it, underscored by the two projections that cut a horizontal line through the space. The glass forms become trembling drops or pistons, embodiments of the impalpable that surrounds the audience during the concert’s sixty minutes. Perhaps they’re lost souls, perhaps memories being mirrored? The music resonates in these vessels. If the space had looked different – if it had borne other memories – the timbre would have been another. The installation adds a dimension which has something unpredictable about it.

FORSGREN: Projections appear on both sides of the glass installation in which the text fragments included with the score are shown, among other things. It’s difficult to make out everything the voices say. I know that in some places Reich feels there’s an emotional quality which will be understood even though you might not be able to discern the words. My own feeling was that in Sweden it was important to help the audience. We’re not a country with a strong emotional connection to these subjects, nor do we have a strong sense of obligation or guilt. That’s why I selected images with which to intersperse the texts. Some are newsreels from American archives. For the first part of the work I chose a black-and-white film from what could be Reich’s childhood. The photographs are simple and terse, remaining within the movement and rhythm of the work. For the second part we have photographs and film sequences of deportations. Absolutely no iconic images. You see people carrying bundles on their backs, you see them being herded together, but there’s no violence. Somewhere a soldier can be glimpsed. Then there are pictures from inside the freight cars. The camera looks out at people getting on. I purposely chose to work with a calm and bizarrely normal tone in these sequences. I want you to feel that these people are still healthy. They’re wearing nice clothes which aren’t torn. They’re normally plump and haven’t faced starvation yet. I wanted to get a feeling of here and now. After all, this happened to people in their ordinary lives. That was very important. The attack on these ordinary lives. And that it could be taking place today, too. In the third part of the work, named “After the war” by Reich, I wanted to capture the dream that was America, the dream of arriving on a new continent after the war. Many Jewish survivors moved to Israel or America. Some of them had relatives there, but most were driven mainly by

the hope of beginning a new life. America became the prototypical dreamland. That's why I chose to work with color photographs and old Technicolor films of trains.

FIORETOS: How do the colors relate to the lighting?

FORSGREN: In both cases the colors are strong and simple. Blue, yellow, red. I've chosen colors with something positive in them. Reich describes how his journeys were fun. For a boy it was exciting to travel across the American continent. To underline the passage of time I move from black and white original films to Technicolor, also to celebrate the sensuality of the experiences. In the middle part, "during the war," Reich intensifies the music in a way that many people find angst-filled — even those who don't have war memories of their own. No circumstantial pictures are needed here. You feel that this is about a point of no return.

FIORETOS: Nobody pulls the emergency brake.

FORSGREN: No, the whistles blow more and louder and more shrilly than ever. It felt natural to keep everything in black and white, including the light. The last section uses rich colors. I really wanted the audience to feel the joy after the war.

FIORETOS: Relief?

FORSGREN: Yes, relief. Then Steve Reich tightens the noose anyway. At the end of the third movement we hear of the Germans who force an imprisoned Jewish girl to sing. When you hear the question "Are you sure, are you sure?" it's hard not to wonder: is the war really over?

FIORETOS: The effect is heightened by a voice repeating, toward the end: "and when she stopped singing, they said 'More, more' and they applauded." Then the work ends, which places the audience in a quandary. Convention dictates that you should applaud, but how can you do that without going along with the murderous logic that once transformed the encore into a prelude of death?

FORSGREN: I'm glad you brought up that sentence. Many people





have been very affected by it. I've never put on a work where so many people come out afterward with their faces swollen from crying. That's why the Fleshquartet's own piece is so important. The audience must not be made to feel embarrassed. No choice should be forced on them. Of course there should be empathy and reflection, but you need to find a humane transition.

FIORETOS: The phrase causes a double bind. As listener, you get the feeling of not being able to choose, since you'll be committing an error no matter what you do. This lack of a way out is almost unbearable. The Fleshquartet's piece resolves this by offering a way out. The audience understands that the music isn't over.

FORSGREN: That's right. The lights go down and the musicians calmly move on to their own piece. I wanted electronic music stands, to emphasize the immaterial aspect. I wanted everything to be music and light and translucent glass. So the lights on the music stands go out, the musicians remove their earplugs, someone quietly turns down an amplifier. Then they step out into the space. The audience is led into a new atmosphere. Life still goes on, but softly, so softly.

FIORETOS: Tears Apart is a piece full of contradictions. Just take the title. First you think of tears – the clearest evidence that we're in a period after the shock. But then the title's other word brings a relativity to this information. Apart suggests that the tears are separate, but also that you should set them aside, perhaps even disregard them. This contradiction becomes no easier to unravel when you realize that you might not be dealing with a plural noun at all – it could just as well be a verb in the third person singular. Read as a verb phrase, the title would suggest forcible separation, possibly also individual sundering.

FORSGREN: It was important that Different Trains should be followed by Tears Apart. I wanted to let go of the high tension that Reich maintains, a force I feel almost has an accusation in it. Or at least it urges questions such as "Am I complicit?" "Am I not complicit?" "Could I become a person who acquiesced to these kinds of events?" "Or would I be a person who says no?" For the Fleshquartet, the challenge was to reflect on Different Trains, to give form to this ambivalence. I also wanted them to restore a strong sense

of joy to the audience – sensualism, hope, playfulness. The quartet composed on site after having learned *Different Trains*. They were completely full of music and composed fluidly through improvisation. I think I can claim that *Tears Apart* was born in this glass space.

The pieces are about equal in length, which is not a coincidence. I requested that, for the sake of balance. The quartet members themselves were convinced the audience would applaud when Reich's piece was over. That's what people do at concerts. But I said that if they begin to move into their own music, people will understand that it isn't over. I wanted them to step out into the space, break the habit that says that up there on the podium are the musicians playing a concert.

FIORETOS: There is no longer a railroad, no longer a catastrophic destination. The transition to *Tears Apart* creates new paths.

FORSGREN: Yes. For example, it felt important to fill the space so that no black was left. I was looking for playfulness, for vibrant geometrical figures which would evoke the esthetics of the 1950s and 60s. I wanted the audience to feel that this was after the war, in an open Afterward. Of course it's also an esthetic which has become fashionable again, and thus you get a reconnection with our era.

FIORETOS: The audience is literally seated in the installation – they're a part of the configuration of the space and they change the play of light and the music's resonance by their very presence. I presume this was important for the overall character of the space?

FORSGREN: Yes. I said to Ann early on that the most important thing was for the audience to be seated in the glass. I wanted to create a sense of intimacy which makes people open up, but I also wanted to subject them to a powerful expression. It could even be reminiscent of a liturgy. I wanted each person to see the rest of the audience, but not in any stressful way. So we've worked hard to allow the guests to see each other but not be disturbed by each other. Because the *Fleshquartet* is seated on a podium, you get an upward direction in the space. The height of the theater's ceiling played a more important part than in previous works. We wanted the volume to remain truly empty, so the ceiling is free of all clutter except for the bars needed to suspend the lights. This empty space is as important as the glass. And the fact that the audience enters in darkness. The only thing

they see at first is the blue light along the floor, to help them find their way. Gradually you begin to see shapes, but it's impossible to say whether they're of glass or not. Then you discern the backs of the musicians – that there are people seated in the middle. This is a process. It takes the audience quite a long time to come in and be seated. It's a part of the staging itself. The concert doesn't end, either, but dies away gradually like a resonating sound. The *Fleshquartet* open up a lighter, more open space in which everyone can see each other, in which you somehow become a fellow human who has to relate to others. I quickly noticed that people didn't want to get up when the concert was over. Several people were so overcome with emotion that they were unable to step outside or speak. I suppose they were going through anything from a very intense art experience to difficult memories – experiences from the war, but also personal grief, muted feelings of loss and threats. Those who want to are free to stay. The audience isn't chased out of the theater according to some orderly scheme with "the bus will be leaving in five minutes." That's why we added a beautiful light that passes through the glass shapes. It's a movement that lingers for ten minutes and allows you to find your feet, walk around and look at the glass installation or reflect on the concert.

ARIS FIORETOS,
WRITER AND A MEMBER OF THE GERMAN ACADEMY
FOR LANGUAGE AND POETRY



CHRISTIAN OLSSON
SAMPLED VIOLIN



A black and white portrait of Örjan Högborg, a man with a serious expression, wearing a dark jacket and a flat cap. He is holding a viola, which is visible on the left side of the frame. The viola has a dark body and a light-colored neck. The text "ÖRJAN HÖGBERG" and "VIOLA" is printed in a serif font to the left of the man's head.

ÖRJAN HÖGBERG
VIOLA



MATTIAS HELLDÉN
CELLO



SEBASTIAN ÖBERG
CELLO





SCRAP
BOOK









GLASS MOVEMENTS
A CONVERSATION WITH ANN WÅHLSTRÖM
BY TOM HEDQVIST



he first time I saw your work was in 1982 at an exhibition at the University College of Arts, Crafts and Design in Stockholm, which you attended after your studies in the United States. I particularly recall a number of geometric vases in black and different colors, based on conical forms. They impressed me with their precision and restraint – not exactly the studio glass we were used to seeing in Sweden in the 1980s. Since then, I have followed your work closely, both your product design at the Kosta Boda glassworks and, in more recent years, the glass objects you have produced in the United States.

We find ourselves at The Jewish Theatre, in the setting for *Different Trains*, a visual concert based on the music and texts of Steve Reich. You contribute a scenographic glass installation that encompasses the room.

TOM HEDQVIST: Have you worked with stage design before?

ANN WÅHLSTRÖM: No, never. This is an entirely new departure for me – using glass to create a room. I am accustomed to shapes and objects, but this has been a journey I could never have imagined.

HEDQVIST: How did you come to receive this commission?

WÅHLSTRÖM: Pia Forsgren saw my retrospective *Cyklon* at Sweden's Museum of Glass in Växjö in 1999, where I showed a series of large drop-shaped objects I called Soapbubbles. Since then, she has been eager to find an opportunity to work with glass and light in a scenographic context at The Jewish Theatre. It's been a couple of years since she first contacted me about this particular project.

HEDQVIST: How much did director Pia Forsgren tell you about the material?

WÅHLSTRÖM: We met and Pia told me about her idea. She wanted to begin with the space, setting no prior conditions whatsoever, and seeing where the process took us. She imagined a room in which the audience would be surrounded by glass – like bodies. I took this



concept with me when I visited the Czech Republic to look for glass factories to collaborate with. Among the places I visited was Sázava, where the company Kavalier is located. I was introduced by Charlie Parriott, one of my contacts from the glass community in Seattle. Kavalier specializes in laboratory glass and I immediately saw interesting potential.

I began to make some sketches and returned with Pia and producer Elisabeth Secher Svenstedt from The Jewish Theatre to show them my ideas. The same evening, I spent some time with a few of Kavalier's glass blowers. The factory has nine large continuous feed glass furnaces, so the size is immense. One corner of the factory is set aside for manual production of smaller series and it was there we began to experiment, entirely by hand, with glass shapes so large they almost burst. I managed to get the glass blowers to stop the process at precisely the right moment.

HEDQVIST: How did you proceed with the glass in the performance space itself?

WÅHLSTRÖM: When the samples eventually arrived from the Czech Republic, we began to feel our way by hanging the pieces in different ways in the space. We tried these arrangements with different lighting solutions and then decided to move on. Pia gave me total freedom and advanced the process almost imperceptibly after having initially sown just a few but very vigorous seeds.

HEDQVIST: Of how much glass does the installation consist?

WÅHLSTRÖM: In total there are nearly 90 objects of different sizes arranged in groups encompassing the musicians and the audience. Some are hanging and quite large in volume while others, somewhat smaller, are arranged lying. They are clear, sandblasted or silver foiled.

It is an extensive and complicated arrangement with specially designed lighting units and a rich palette of colors, digitally controlled. Each body of glass has been lit individually by lighting designer Hans-Åke Sjöquist in symbiosis with the music. The arrangement of the audience and the musicians in the room is also crucial to the total experience. Having the opportunity to work with a lighting designer and thereby being able to see and control the transformation of the glass opened up a whole new world!

HEDQVIST: What about Steve Reich and Different Trains?

WÅHLSTRÖM: When Pia presented her vision of combining Steve Reich's music with a glass installation and lighting we entered a new phase.

I was not familiar with Different Trains, and at first I couldn't "hear" my glass in the work. Eventually, however, I started to feel that I could rest in the abstraction. In the glass and the light and the music...

The projection of the texts, "Before, during and after the war," which are read out by Reich's nanny and others, were not brought into the space until a later point in time.

HEDQVIST: You spent a long time working within the art industry at Kosta Boda. How was this project different?

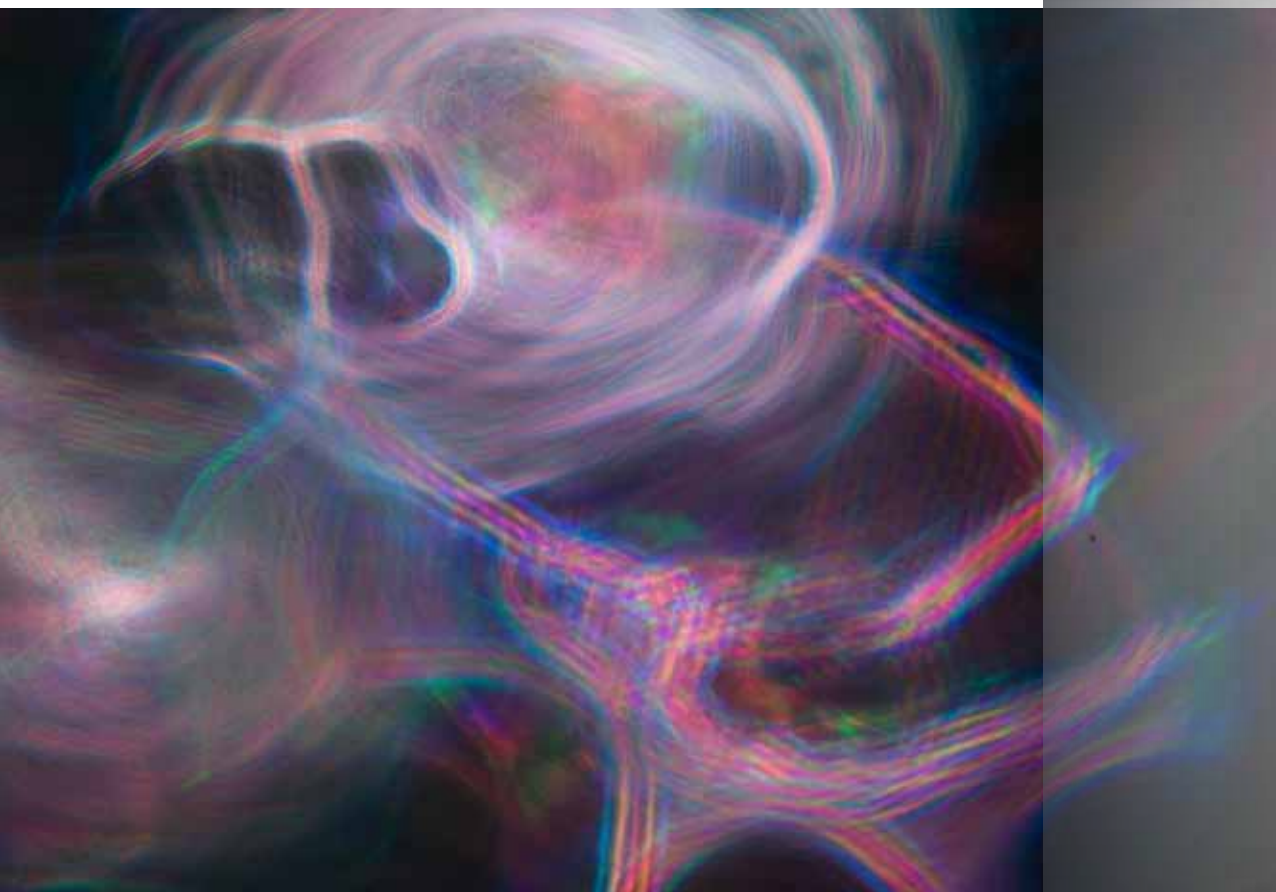
WÅHLSTRÖM: Over the years I have, of course, become accustomed to meeting expectations in the form of products designed with sales and production figures constantly in mind. In industry, the freedom you have as a designer is actually very restricted. With this project, I felt completely free. I had the opportunity to learn, to take my time and to find totally new artistic possibilities in glass. The project has given me an entirely new experience and I'm far from finished with that wonderful Kavalier factory.

TOM HEDQVIST,
PRINCIPAL OF THE BECKMANS COLLEGE OF DESIGN IN STOCKHOLM









NEXT STOP?



The post-war era is definitively over. The world order that has prevailed since the end of World War II has shifted into one more reminiscent of the inter-war years, although today fast-growing countries in Asia are dissatisfied with their status, rather than Germany. The Berlin-Paris axis, so important to Europe for half a century, is being increasingly replaced with politics with national interests in focus. The ability of the United States to project power is on the decline, as we move into an unpredictable world of great power rivalry.

The global financial crisis reinforces the parallels with the 1930s. Then, Fascist movements attracted those who were disillusioned with socialism, capitalism, and political/economic internationalization. In some ways, the world of a century ago was more globalized than the one we live in today, although this globalization trend was later dramatically reversed. Large groups of the population experienced themselves as losers. They felt they were living in a time of uncertainty, and they had no access to the prosperity experienced only by those at the very top.

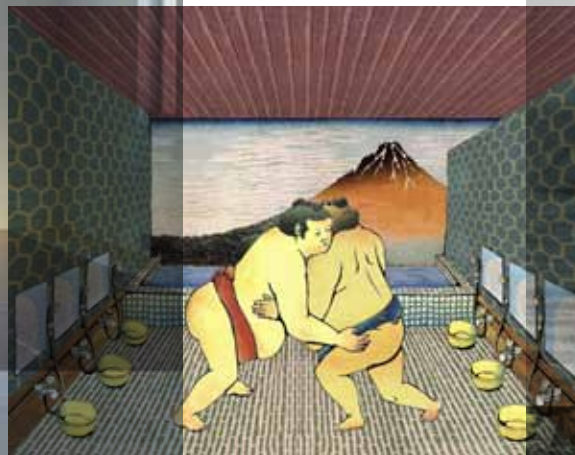
History is not a train with a given destination, and yet there are worrisome similarities between the 1930s and the world today. Socialism and capitalism have now been discredited in many people's eyes, those who see themselves as losers in the globalization process. Prosperity is, now as then, mainly an attribute of those at the very top, while the general salary situation has stagnated. American households have gone into debt in order to maintain their levels of consumption, and more debt is promoted to the current crisis. Taxpayers have reluctantly paid for bailouts of large banks. The new economic nationalism that is rearing its head may escalate, and strengthen political nationalism.

A time of crisis is a time of risk and of opportunity. At such times it is more important than ever for us to learn from history. If the forces of democracy fail to deal with the down sides of globalization and capitalism, totalitarian movements will exploit the dissatisfaction in society for their own agendas.

Intellectual insight into the past is necessary, but not sufficient. The Holocaust required emotional distancing mechanisms to be in place. Real learning requires recapturing feelings and sensing the human reality concealed by bureaucratic and political terms. This is precisely what Steve Reich achieved in *Different Trains* by allowing different tracks to intersect.

PIA FORSGREN, DIRECTOR AND
ROBERT WEIL, FOUNDER
OF THE JEWISH THEATRE STOCKHOLM

CROSSING THE LINE



PIA FORSGREN, DIRECTOR
ABOUT THE JEWISH THEATRE STOCKHOLM

Language is form. "Ex-pression." And form is language. "Im-pression?" Space is also language. You walk into a room and expect it to tell you something.... Movement is language. The way you walk tells the space that you have a question. Or a proposition. Music also speaks. And so forth. You can choose any door to enter into a drama. Or you can keep them all open.

Which we did for The Jewish Theatre Stockholm. I myself came from ten years at the Royal Dramatic Theatre. I wanted to take risks. And Robert Weil offered us a space sublime and flexible, a blank page waiting to be filled. There would be room enough for both political fireworks and poetic choruses in the years to come.

Mine was an open invitation to the world of many languages. Or rather to a new fusion of languages. The names on our invitations speak for themselves. Steve Reich, Marguerite Duras, Ohad Naharin, Tabaimo, Daniel Barenboim, Katarina Frostenson, Harold Pinter....

So I have tried to shape the congenial space through architectural and technical solutions for each of their unique expressions. In fact, a theatrical language open to the winds of interchange. Strong enough for trans-political charges, borderless for trespassing poetry, flexible and transparent for daring dancers and artists. A room filled with glass for the Reich piece you are about to hear and see. A multilevel platform for Duras. A multi-directional metroliner for Tabaimo and Naharin....

And my first invitation goes to you, the participating audience. You will be encircling the dramatic version of Steve Reich's musical narration of World War II. Others before you were lifted up to meet the actors eye-to-eye in Duras' enthralling tale of Prague 68. Others again invaded the stage to jump on Naharin/Tabaimo's travelling installation. As a second stage, our foyer offers you a space for relief and reflection, for post- or pro-dialogue. And an Art-Cinema spot for experimentals and documentaries (id/IDENTITY). It's all yours. You have my word.



DIFFERENT TRAINS
BY STEVE REICH

THE FLESHQUARTET

Cello Mattias Helldén
Viola Örjan Högberg
Sampled violin Christian Olsson
Cello Sebastian Öberg

Pre-recorded material from Steve Reich's Different Trains
performed by The Kronos Quartet
(Nonesuch Records 79176-2)

Tears Apart by The Fleshquartet

Direction, Concept and Set Design by Pia Forsgren

Glass Design Ann Wählström
Lighting Design Hans-Åke Sjöquist
Costume Design Mikael T. Zielinski
Sound Design Oskar Johansson
Projections Different Trains Johan Edström

Stage Design Consultant Kjell Sörman
and Lawrence Jasse

Programmer and Operator Eric Holmberg
Operator Wilhelm Egnell

Graphic Design
and Communication Anders Wester, Fredrik Axell
Portrait Photo Bersa
Performance Photo Jonas Lindström
Rehearsal and Projection Photo Siri Isgren
Excerpts from Films Prelinger Archives

Glass Production Kavalier, Czech Republic
Podium Lars Jonzon Snickare
Set Builder Philipson & Franck
Light Bellalight
Costume Fabrics H&M

Music Agent Gehrmans Musikförlag
and Boosey & Hawkes

Producer Elisabeth Secher Svenstedt

Program Editor Pia Forsgren, Elisabeth Secher
Svenstedt and Anders Wester

Project Manager Anna Cokorilo
Design Anders Wester
and Fredrik Axell

Production Anders Wester, Fredrik Axell
and Conny Hedman

Graphic Management Carlsson Communication

Translation 'Pulse is Everything' by
Tomas Tranæus.
'Glass Movements' by
Bryan Mosey.
'Next Stop' by Linda Schenck.

Published by The Jewish Theatre Stockholm

Thanks to
Anders Wester who has helped The Jewish Theatre pro bono
throughout the years with our communication.

Pia Forsgren's visual interpretation of Different Trains by Steve Reich
has received rave reviews and record attendance.
Different Trains was performed 62 times at The Jewish Theatre
in Stockholm during the 2008/2009 season.

PROGRAM PHOTOGRAPHY:

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