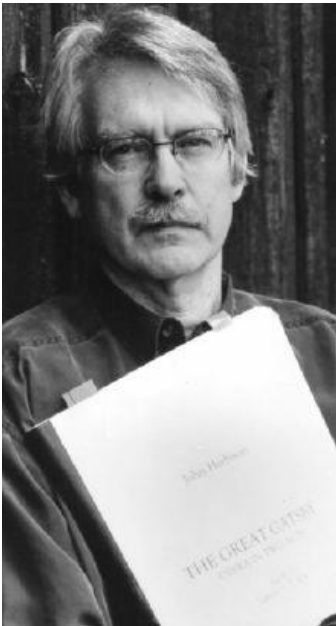


John Harbison



John Harbison
Photo: Katrin Talbot

John Harbison is one of America's most distinguished artistic figures. Among his principal compositions are four string quartets, four symphonies, the cantata **The Flight Into Egypt**, which earned him a Pulitzer Prize in 1987, and three operas including **The Great Gatsby**, commissioned by The Metropolitan Opera and premiered to great acclaim in December 1999.

Harbison's music is distinguished by its exceptional resourcefulness and expressive range. He has written for every conceivable type of concert performance, ranging from the grandest to the most intimate, pieces that embrace jazz along with the pre-classical forms. He is considered to be "original, varied, and absorbing

— relatively easy for audiences to grasp and yet formal and complex enough to hold our interest through repeated hearings — his style boasts both lucidity and logic" (Fanfare 1993). Harbison is also a gifted commentator on the art and craft of composition and was recognized in his student years as an outstanding poet (he wrote his own libretto for **Gatsby**). Today, he continues to convey, through the spoken word, the multiple meanings of contemporary composition.

Two major new works will anchor the 2005-06 season, **Milosz Songs**, commissioned by the New York Philharmonic for long-time Harbison champion Dawn Upshaw, and a **Double Bass Concerto** commissioned by The International Society of Double Bassists for a consortium of major orchestras. Also forthcoming is **Canonic American Songbook** for the Albany Symphony, three motets for the Cantata Singers of Boston, and chamber works for cello and piano, horn quartet, and percussion ensemble.

In the 2004-05 season Harbison composed a new work for the Atlanta Chamber players and Da Capo Chamber Players (**Songs America Loves to Sing**), and an overture for the Boston Symphony, **Darkbloom**, celebrating James Levine's first season as music director. Recent premieres include **Symphony No. 4** for the Seattle Symphony, a **Piano Trio** for the Amelia Trio, and the motet **Abraham**, commissioned for the Papal Concert of Reconciliation in Rome in 2004. Other recent works include his **Requiem** for the Boston Symphony Orchestra, **Piano Sonata No. 2** for Robert Levin, **String Quartet No. 4** for the Orion String Quartet, **The Violists' Notebook**, **Four Psalms** (commissioned by the Israeli Consulate for the Chicago Symphony to celebrate

the 50th anniversary of the founding of the State of Israel), and **Partita**, a Minnesota Orchestra centennial commission. Major revivals of **The Great Gatsby** took place at the Lyric Opera of Chicago in October 2000 and at the Metropolitan Opera in May 2002.

Harbison has been composer-in-residence with the Pittsburgh Symphony, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Tanglewood, Marlboro, and Santa Fe Chamber Music Festivals, and the American Academy in Rome. His music has been performed by many of the world's leading ensembles, and more than 30 of his compositions have been recorded on the Nonesuch, Naxos, Northeastern, Harmonia Mundi, New World, Decca, Koch, Albany, Musica Omnia, Centaur, Archetype, and CRI labels. Recordings of his **Cello Concerto**, **Four Psalms**, and **Emerson** in 2004, and **Ulysses** and **Partita** have recently been recorded for future release.

As conductor, Harbison has led a number of leading orchestras and chamber groups. From 1990 to 1992 he was Creative Chair with the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, conducting music from Monteverdi to the present. In 1991, at the Ojai Festival, he led the Scottish Chamber Orchestra. Former music director of the Cantata Singers in Boston, Harbison has conducted many other ensembles, among them the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Boston Symphony, and the Handel and Haydn Society. For many years he has been principal guest conductor of Emmanuel Music in Boston, leading performances of Bach cantatas, 17th-century motets, and new music.

Harbison was born in Orange, New Jersey on 20 December 1938 into a musical family. He was improvising on the piano by five years of age and started a jazz band at age 12. He did his undergraduate work at Harvard University and

earned an MFA from Princeton University. Following completion of a junior fellowship at Harvard, Harbison joined the faculty at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology where, in 1984, he was named Class of 1949 Professor of Music, in 1994, Killian Award Lecturer in recognition of "extraordinary professional accomplishments;" and in 1995 named Institute Professor. He has also taught at CalArts and Boston University, and in 1991 he was the Mary Biddle Duke Lecturer in Music at Duke University.

In 1998, Harbison was named winner of the Heinz Award for the Arts and Humanities, a prize established in honor of the late Senator John Heinz by his wife Teresa to recognize five leaders annually for significant and sustained contributions in the Arts and Humanities, the Environment, the Human Condition, Public Policy and Technology, and the Economy and Employment. Among other awards Harbison has received are the Distinguished Composer award from the American Composer's Orchestra (2002), the Harvard Arts Medal (2000), the American Music Center's Letter of Distinction (2000), the Kennedy Center Friedheim First Prize (for his Piano Concerto), and a MacArthur Fellowship in 1989. He also holds four honorary doctorates. Much of his violin music has been composed for his wife, Rose Mary, and with her he serves as artistic director of the Token Creek Chamber Music Festival on the family farm in Wisconsin.

Furthering the work of younger composers is one of Harbison's prime interests, and he serves on the boards of directors of the Copland Fund (as president) and the Koussevitzky Foundation. His music is published exclusively by Associated Music Publishers.

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