



GLASS HOUSE

As the new Linz Opera in Linz, Austria, puts on Philip Glass's latest work, the minimalist master reveals his maximalist ambitions.

with Davies is one of the great partnerships in contemporary music. (The two men also have neighboring townhouses in New York's East Village.) As well as commissioning orchestral symphonies from Glass, Davies, who is music director and chief conductor at Linz, has premiered most of his operas. "What I get from Dennis is something that most conductors don't bring to it," Glass explains. "Dennis understands the language, he understands the stage, he knows how to invoke the myriad forces required in the presentation of an opera and bring them under the baton of the conductor."

The Austrian town of Linz (population: 191,107) may seem an unlikely new capital of modern world opera, but as Glass points out, it has invariably punched above its weight. "It's a very creative company, and it's always had an international inclination, going way beyond the small borders of the town to bring in composers, directors and choreographers from all over the world. They've been doing progressive work for a long time; now they have the right house for it."

Designed by London-based architect Terry Pawson, the futuristic new hall—which also showcases musical theater and dance—has set the arts and architecture worlds abuzz with its environmentally progressive structure and unparalleled acoustics. Opening directly onto

Philip Glass, above, has unveiled two operas in one year. "It is the hardest work I know," he says.

* It's about everything, really," says composer **Philip Glass** of his latest opera, *The Lost*, which made its world premiere in April to mark the inauguration of the eagerly anticipated Linz Opera, in its namesake city, 114 miles from Vienna. Based on Peter Handke's play *Spuren der Verirrten*, the work, says Glass, is "about an individual's existential problems, but it's about a society, too. It's really a kind of pageant: of the anxieties, the hopes and fears and dreams of humanity." He lets out a dry chuckle. "Big subjects."

Glass, 76, is no stranger to big subjects: Previously he has tackled Gandhi, Einstein, the pharaoh Akhnaten, Renaissance mathematics and astronomy, and Walt Disney—in *The Perfect American*, which opened in Madrid in January. It was conducted by

Dennis Russell Davies, Glass's friend and long-time collaborator, with whom he is also working on *The Lost*.

"Can you imagine having a baby and then the next week having another baby?" Glass jokes. "Doing two operas in the same year is kind of like that! It is the hardest work that I know. Operas draw from so much of your resources, and, unflinchingly, you just have to put yourself into them. At the same time it is a boundlessly joyful and tremendously exhilarating experience."

Glass may be the more recognizable name, thanks in part to his Oscar-nominated film scores, among them *The Hours* and *Notes on a Scandal*, but his 30-plus-year collaboration

the Volksgarten ("peoples' park"), the space was designed by Pawson to be a "new living room for the city," in the manner of Frank Gehry's Walt Disney Concert Hall in L.A. "It embraces the idea that the theater is part of the social context. There are elements and sounds that happen in the city that will happen in the opera also," says Pawson. To Glass, this is significant. "This building," he says, "is more than a town hall dealing with matters of moment, matters of revenue, expenditures, keeping the laws and so forth. This is a different town hall—a space of culture, ideas, sentiment, history. And of the future."

Speaking of the future, the astonishingly prolific septuagenarian shows no sign of slowing down. Among his upcoming projects is another literary opera, based on Kafka's *The Trial*, for Music Theatre Wales (musictheatrewales.org.uk). And he remains as curious about humanity as ever. The day after our interview, Glass was due to hop a plane to Guatemala, to walk through the jungle and visit a recently discovered archaeological site, uninhabited for the last thousand years. ("The opposite of sitting at home and writing an opera," as he puts it.)

Is he seeking inspiration? Opera subjects?

A dramatic change of scenery? "I'm just going to look," says Glass, who has taken similar trips all over the world as part of his musical and intellectual explorations. "To look at buildings and places where people lived. People like us. And yet it won't look like anything we've seen before, because this was a life radically different from anything that we know." He pauses. "Something to ponder, isn't it?" —CLEMENCY BURTON-HILL

The *Lost* will be playing through the 2013–14 season at Linz Opera, Promenade 39; 43-732/76110.



GATSBY'S GARMENTS

Costume designer Catherine Martin's gloriously lush work on films like *Moulin Rouge* and *Romeo + Juliet* not only won the Australian numerous filmic accolades, they firmly established her as a visionary in the world of art and fashion. With her latest film, *The Great Gatsby*, the 21st-century Edith Head has collaborated once again with her director husband Baz Luhrmann, as well as Tiffany's, Brooks Brothers and Prada (another repeat partner), to reimagine in a modern manner the decadence and sophistication of the 1920s so lavishly depicted by F. Scott Fitzgerald. Here is but a small sampling of Martin's work in the film, which hits theaters May 10. —SUSAN MICHALS

Daisy Buchanan's Robe de Style Dress

"Daisy [Carey Mulligan] is lounging on a couch when her cousin Nick Carraway [Tobey Maguire] drops by. She needs to exude a febrile energy amid a luxurious white room. I created a delicate dress of cream lace, with handsewn cream organza petals and a slightly metallic embroidered edge on each. In the 1920s, the shapes were varied; it was all about the application of decoration."

Jay Gatsby's Pink Suit

"Remember, Gatsby [Leonardo DiCaprio] is a romantic. Brooks Brothers had been making pink shirts for more than 100 years, and while working with their archivists, we discovered a pink seersucker suit it sold in 1922. I worked with the brand to do an authentic re-creation, customizing the fabric. Wearing it, Gatsby's still physically powerful; he just expresses it in a different way."

Tom Buchanan's Blue Suit

"Buchanan [Joel Edgerton] and Gatsby are within the same financial stratosphere, but their backgrounds are different. Gatsby is self-made and so a bit flamboyant. Tom is attached to Victorianism, the old establishment—which we channel with a blue pinstripe suit, also by Brooks Brothers, which he fills with a kind of gusto that's practically bursting out of his clothes."

RAYMOND MEIER

BAZMARK (3)