

# **25 Years after *Einstein On The Beach***

Frank J. Oteri talks with Philip Glass  
Dunvagen Studios, New York, NY  
Tuesday, October 9, 2001, 5:00 - 6:00 PM

Videotaped and transcribed by Amanda MacBlane

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## 1. Art vs. Entertainment

FRANK J. OTERI: November 21, 2001 is the 25th anniversary of the U.S. premiere of *Einstein On The Beach* at the Metropolitan Opera. Twenty-five years is a long time and I thought it would be a great opportunity to talk to you about how you feel the world has changed musically since *Einstein*, how you have changed, and how new music as we perceive it has changed.

PHILIP GLASS: Well, for one thing, I've had the opportunity to perform it and to produce it again. First in '84, that was eight years later and then in '92 eight years later to that, and normally we would have done it this year. In fact, we will probably be making a new production in 2003. So, though it would've been nice to hit the 25th anniversary, we didn't do it. But we have very serious plans. Bob [Wilson] and I are talking about doing it. We have producers that want to do it. So I had the opportunity to see it eight years and then sixteen years after the opening. Eight years later it wasn't such a big difference. Sixteen years later things really began to change. It became clear that there was an audience who had never seen it. Some people brought the kids who were maybe too young before. There were dads and moms in their mid-forties who were bringing eighteen year-old kids. That kind of thing was going on. And what we really discovered from the audience is that in fact, and I hadn't really thought about this, was that it was even more surprising in '92 than it was in '76.

FRANK J. OTERI: Why is that?

PHILIP GLASS: Because the world's become more conservative. Because the art business has turned into the entertainment business. Because the power of movie and TV to degrade our aesthetics has been so complete that many young people had no idea that there was even such a thing as the avant-garde, they haven't lived in it, they haven't seen it. A lot of people think theater is a version of what they see on TV. You have to remember that the aesthetic of *Einstein* really came out of experimental theatre I would say, it was based on things like the Living Theatre. Bob Wilson's theater was part of a generation slightly younger, but a very important part of people like Peter Brook and [Jerzy] Grotowski and Meredith Monk. There were all these people, and where do you find these people now? It's not that there isn't experimental work, but the ability to produce work... Let me put it this way, there was a very strong community of support of continuity for experimental work, I'm not sure the community exists in the same way at all.

FRANK J. OTERI: Well, certainly at the time that *Einstein On The Beach* was first conceived and performed was before MTV even existed...

PHILIP GLASS: That's what I mean. Can you imagine conceiving of a piece that's five and a half hours long? In those days that wasn't so surprising. We're talking now about an audience that does not have an expectation of seeing a work which requires sitting still for that long.

FRANK J. OTERI: Except in a weird kind of way. I bring up MTV because what you did was a precursor to what they turned into for a mass market medium.

PHILIP GLASS: Well, that's right. I think another important point is what we think the art world is. A lot of what we think of as the art world is actually the entertainment world. You used the word market. That's entertainment. That's what the entertainment business does. And the entertainment world has even co-opted the word artist. We talk about film stars as being artists. If Mel Gibson is an artist, then who's Merce Cunningham? Basically, we've lost a consciousness that there's such a thing. I'm not complaining about entertainment. In fact, the thing about opera that's so interesting, and that's true of *Einstein* as well, was that opera was always the place where art and entertainment coexisted, where they came together. That was true for *Einstein*, but it was also true historically. That's what Verdi was about; that's what Mozart was. What do you think *The Magic Flute* was? It was a huge, popular piece of theater work in its day. So it's not the entertainment part that's the problem; the problem is that the art part isn't there anymore.

FRANK J. OTERI: To take it into the so-called "concert music" ghetto for a second, outside of the popular culture mainstream... When *Einstein* premiered, it was a very different time for new music. And new music's relationship to the larger classical music community certainly meant something very different then than I think it does now largely because of works like *Einstein* and your other work.

PHILIP GLASS: Well, that's true. In the mid- and late sixties, if someone said they wrote modern music, you knew exactly what it was, you didn't even have to hear it. If someone says they write modern music today, you don't know what it is until you hear it. Diversity has become entrenched. You can have areas that are controlled by certain subcultures of modern music. The universities control a certain amount in terms of teaching, in terms of fellowships, in terms of awards. Every little subculture of the music world has found its own way to find a place and have kind of a power structure within that. But I think no one is so bold as to claim that they're the voice of the future of music; they would've been and were in fact all the time in the sixties. No one does that today, as far as I know. I mean it was so patently false and untrue. The idea of the future of music being controlled by descendants of Central European experimental new music of the early 1900s is laughable. It was laughable then, but no one even says it now. So basically you have this huge kind of coexisting diversity, which is going on right now. However, my feeling is that *Einstein*, even within that context, is on the radical side.

## 2. Labels, Music Criticism and Changing Tastes

FRANK J. OTERI: Well, to tackle that hobgoblin word "minimalist," certainly that was the term that was used in the '70s and has stuck to some extent for better or worse, and it's sort of an odd way to describe your work because so much of your work is maximalist in its ambitions. You write large-scale works about major historical figures and cataclysmic forces in history... So what does that word mean to you now and is it an historical period?

PHILIP GLASS: Well, of course it is. By '75, it was over. Everybody knows that. There were a few people who continued in that style more or less, some more than others, but in fact, the distinguishing features of that music were perfected in the late sixties and early seventies, and clearly no one really does it anymore. However, to be honest, they say, "What should we call it?" and I say, "Why are you people so lazy? Why do you just keep repeating... This is not my problem, this is your problem!" The difficulty is, for example, I'm out doing something like *La Belle et la Bête*, and I read in the paper that there's a minimalist opera...and I said, "Well, you know, what purpose is it serving? Are you helping, are you preparing the listeners for what they're going to hear?" And clearly they're not. So the difficulty is that it doesn't prepare anybody for anything. It's basically what the editor of the newspaper wants. They want and you can see, the men and women who write these things, they have like 400 words or 500 words and if they can find a word, even if it doesn't mean anything, at least it sounds like it means something and instead of explaining what it is or talking about theater music or talking about collaborative work or talking about world music or developments in experimental music, which all takes time and patience to do, they just slap a word on it and they're done.

FRANK J. OTERI: Well, I thought it was so peculiar that when John Cage died and got a page one obituary in the *New York Times*, the headline called him a minimalist composer.

PHILIP GLASS: Well, I think they were confused weren't they?

FRANK J. OTERI: It was the strangest thing!

PHILIP GLASS: It was strange. These things aren't so important, frankly. The point, in fact, is that it is very difficult to deal in the historic present. Very few people can do it. The history of criticism is a history of failure. That's what it is. No one at the time understood; whether it was Stravinsky or Beethoven or Mozart, no one knew what it was.

FRANK J. OTERI: Well, you talked about the limited word space, the limited word count of articles, the limited attention spans audiences now have as a result of the entertainment industry. In a way, everybody is hoping to find Cliffs Notes for life, and so we have this word minimalism. I think to most people, it just means repetition.

PHILIP GLASS: Yeah, I don't pay attention to it. If anyone bothers me and asks me what kind of music I write, I say theater music, which has the virtue of being truthful.

FRANK J. OTERI: But you also write symphonies.

PHILIP GLASS: But I write more operas than symphonies. I've written fifteen operas and only six symphonies. I've written 20 dance scores, it goes on and on. So there is much more theater work, I would say 80 percent of the work is for theater. So when I say "music theatre," that comes much closer to what I'm actually doing. And you know, I don't really care what they write. It doesn't matter; I don't read it anyway. I think it's unfortunate if it is misleading. The value of journalism should be the dissemination of information and understanding and when it does the opposite it's rather a bit of a failure. But on the other hand, looking at it from a different point of view, it's difficult to listen to a piece of music that's new and to get a grip on what it's about. Very few people have been able to do that and as I said, the history of music criticism is mostly a history of failure and we all know that! It's not even a big secret and how can it be otherwise? You take people who have to go out every night of the week, let's say four, five nights, to review concerts and this goes on for years and years. To say that they're tired is not even getting close to describing the amount of burnout that goes on in that profession. You've seen it yourself. I'm sure that the kind of bitterness and anger that you read in a lot of the writing comes from the difficulties of the job, because it's just awfully hard, because it's demanding and it's unrewarding and it doesn't pay well and no one reads it anyways and no one cares and it's all thrown in the garbage a week later. There are people who can talk about the culture in a general way and who speak in terms of criticism and reviewing work in terms of a larger cultural landscape, who know literature and who know film ... There are people like that, but we're not talking about the average writer.

FRANK J. OTERI: And of course when you add to that what goes into a premiere of a new piece of music, it's predicated on so many things. With an orchestra, for example, most pieces get two rehearsals.

PHILIP GLASS: Yeah, it doesn't even sound that good.

FRANK J. OTERI: It doesn't sound like what you wrote. You go to performances of your works and I'm sure you don't recognize them most of the time.

PHILIP GLASS: Well, in most cases with my pieces, we're playing works that we've played hundreds of times. They sound terrific. That's what the value of the Ensemble has been. For example, when we do *Einstein* again, we'll play the pants off of it! I mean, we can really play it; we can play all this music. And there is now a growing generation of conductors who know how to conduct this music and do play it. For me, Dennis Davies was a very important one, and Christopher Keene helped, he's gone now. But there are younger people, Dante Anzolini, who was an assistant for Dennis, has been playing a lot of works of mine and Carl Sinclair from the West Coast is doing work. So I'm finding that there are conductors now in their forties or fifties, maybe fifteen or twenty years younger than me, who grew up with the music and so the idiom is not foreign. And besides, the players in the orchestras are no longer as angry about it as they clearly were in the '60s. I can tell you a lot of funny stories of things that happened with major

orchestras, whether it was the Philadelphia or the Cleveland and even the Los Angeles Philharmonic, behavior that was incredibly rude, which doesn't happen anymore.

FRANK J. OTERI: So what changed?

PHILIP GLASS: A lot of people died and new people grew up. That's what really happens. Old people, the people who hate you, get older and go away and the people who are younger and like you grow up. You never convince anybody of anything different, they just die. That's what happened. Those people aren't there anymore. The people that used to throw things at me probably, the people that screamed at concerts, they don't bother to go out or they're not there!

FRANK J. OTERI: You're the first person who's ever said this to me. [laughs]

PHILIP GLASS: But it's obviously true. I mean, think about it. Could it be anything else but that?

FRANK J. OTERI: It makes a lot of sense.

PHILIP GLASS: It's the only thing that makes sense! It's simply demographics. People get older and they go away. The younger people get older and they grew up listening to me. The people who grew up listening to me now are running record companies! You know, you have people like Hurwitz, and not just him, there are A & R people at a lot of the major labels who grew up loving this music, who loved *Einstein*... So what happened to the people that were there before? They're gone! Just gone. [FJO laughs]. Such a simple way of looking but that's what it is. The great wave. The tide comes in; the tide goes out. That's all it is.

### 3. Reflecting on Earlier Music

FRANK J. OTERI: You still actively play your earlier music...

PHILIP GLASS: The active repertoire of the Ensemble dates from '69. When we say active, I mean we don't just play it once in a while. We did *Music in 12 Parts* this summer which is from winter '74; we played a complete version of it. *Music in Similar Motion* of '69 we've often played. Then there are these pieces from *Einstein* that we play all the time. That's '76. Pieces from *Koyaanisqatsi* in the '80s and *Powaqqatsi*, that's the '80s... We play that all the time.

FRANK J. OTERI: So when you go back to these older pieces, do you feel like you're re-examining the past?

PHILIP GLASS: Well, we never stopped playing them. It's not like I opened a closet and the score of *Similar Motion* hit me over the head and I said, "Oh, look what I found!" I mean, we've been playing it all along. And I've had the great fortune or maybe the right idea of having an ensemble that's been playing continuously for thirty years. Over thirty years, we've played 1,500 concerts. That averages about 50 a year, and we didn't play that many the first few years. We're playing five concerts this week. We're playing five concerts next week. We're playing five concerts the week after that. We do a lot of concerts. And in the course of a year we will do what we call retrospective concerts that will come up in the course of the year, every year. So, I haven't had to rediscover the work, the work's become a part of the repertoire. I've always said that the Ensemble was really the library. Of course, the players are wonderful and they've been with me for a while. People like Jon Gibson, and Richard [Landry] and Michael [Riesman], fantastic musicians! What I put into the library is what the repertoire is. The fact is we've been together longer than most string quartets and we play better than most string quartets for that reason. It's real chamber music on a very high level of performance. What do I feel like when I play, let's say, *Music in Similar Motion*, 1969? It's a terrifically energetic piece. We love to play it. The energy of the piece is infectious. We all pick up on it and I feel like there's a young guy who was thirty years old, who's talking to me, you know, when we're playing and that happened to be me. But where is he now? I have no idea. He's nowhere in sight as far as I can tell, but when I play the piece, the wonderful thing about music is that we play a piece from '76, from '84, and whatever kind of emotional, psychological or spiritual entity that made that work, simply comes back. It's like turning a thumbprint into a whole person. It just comes right back and there it is. And sometimes it's shocking. It's very exciting to do especially since, when I listen to those pieces, I can't imagine being able to write them today. I have no interest in writing them today and I wouldn't even know how to do it. I couldn't sit down and write *Einstein* again. I mean, I know technically how to do it, but I could never sit down to do it again. And that would be true of *Music in Twelve Parts* and for most all of the early pieces. That generally tends to be what I do. The new work, for example, the music I've done for these film shorts, it's all new work. That's what I can do now. I can play the old pieces. I can't compose the old pieces, but I can play them. And so it's a wonderful passageway into my own history and

it's a surprising one. I suppose that the other players in the Ensemble must feel that to some degree.

FRANK J. OTERI: Well, what's interesting, you know, you've frequently said this, the music you're writing now is so different from the music you've written in the past and certainly the music that established your career is very different from the music that you were writing in the years before when you were at Juilliard and when you studied with [Nadia] Boulanger, but are there elements that you feel run through all this work that make it all music by Philip Glass?

PHILIP GLASS: I'm sure there are, but that's the hardest thing to tell. It's like looking in the mirror and saying what makes you look the way you look. In fact, we spent a lot of our time, composers and artists, trying to figure out what are those qualities that are distinctively you. In my case, I do it for maybe a somewhat different reason. I've always said that the hardest thing for a composer is not to find the voice. I tell this to students all the time. I was just in Austin, Texas, and I was meeting some honors students in the Museum of Art and I said, "I know you're all worried about finding your voice." I said, "That's the easy part. And you'll do that when you're thirty...inevitably you'll do it. The hard thing is getting rid of it and you'll spend the rest of your life trying to get rid of everything you thought you needed." And this is the issue. The whole issue of the taboos that we create for ourselves. The things that we will not do, that we don't allow ourselves to do. I mean, you can say, you can define a person's style negatively in terms of all the things they aren't able to do.

#### 4. Breaking Musical Taboos

FRANK J. OTERI: Well, one of the things I found interesting starting with your second symphony was the introduction of augmented triads and your use of bitonality. It was such a departure...

PHILIP GLASS: Exactly...

FRANK J. OTERI: That was a taboo.

PHILIP GLASS: Yeah...

FRANK J. OTERI: And you broke it.

PHILIP GLASS: Yeah, well, I've always felt that taboos are interesting things because if we figure out what they are, the chances it's been covering up a kind of musical activity that no one's been able to do for a long time and then once you say "Oh, we're not supposed to do this. Oh, oh, I think I'll do it," and then what happens is you end up writing music that no one's been writing. But it's very hard to see that. It's very hard to see what that is. You say, "Well, I'll just look at the music and figure it out," but it's those very things that we don't see.

FRANK J. OTERI: So what are some of the things that you're trying to get rid of?

PHILIP GLASS: Well, for one thing, the big taboo was the tonality, but once I opened the door into exploring a new tonality, there came to be a lot of other ways to do it that I never thought about, for example, polytonality, which you suggested. It's not simply a question of hearing two different keys at the same time, but rather hearing the same ambiguous key in two different ways, which you can't hear at the same time. You can hear it in one key or you can hear it in the other. You don't hear both keys at the same time, but it's still polytonality. So the big shift when I began to think about tonality had to do with the perception of tonality. The big changes were in what we perceive, it's not what we're writing. So then we get into the biggest taboo, the audience...

FRANK J. OTERI: Because they have certain expectations when they're going to hear a piece...

PHILIP GLASS: It's not that. No, I don't mean that at all. I mean that we're told that we're not supposed to pay attention to the audience. It's as if they aren't there, that we somehow write for ourselves, which means that the whole mechanism of perception is voided. It doesn't happen. It doesn't matter if anyone hears it or not. This is a very big taboo, writing for the audience and I was talking to someone in Germany and they said, "Mr. Glass, you're not actually a very serious composer at all, are you?" and I said, "Probably not." I said, "No, I don't think I am." He said, "Well, what do you do?" And I said, "Well, I'm writing music for an audience at the highest artistic level that I'm capable of." Well, the first part of the sentence, they don't get it. They don't get that. No one is supposed to

say they write for an audience. That's a big taboo, but let's look behind that for a moment. Once we accept the fact that someone is listening to the music, then we can talk about the psychology of perception, but if we don't include the audience we can't talk about it. Isn't that obviously the case? So, the whole relationship with the listener becomes a very interesting one in that way. When I began working with tonality, I was working first of all with the language of music, but I was also working with the mechanism of perception. Adding that into the enterprise of the new music that I was writing, I really began to change things a lot.

FRANK J. OTERI: Well, you've certainly always been aware of music outside of Western classical music, world music has been important to you since your studies with Alla Rakha, and you've collaborated with rock musicians over the years. I still remember the band Polyrock...

PHILIP GLASS: Taboo, taboo, taboo.

FRANK J. OTERI: You've always had these connections. You're not in an ivory tower, you've never been.

## 5. Advice for Other Composers

FRANK J. OTERI: With your busy schedule and your travels and constantly giving concerts, do you find time to listen to other people's music?

PHILIP GLASS: Well, you know, it's problematic in the sense that I get handed tapes and CDs all the time. Fortunately and also unfortunately, it's very easy to make CDs these days, so I get a lot of the stuff... That's harder to do than getting involved with a new music series like the Music At The Anthology I started with two other composers, which is mostly about the music of young composers. It was a way to be involved with new music, with what music might be emerging. I've been supportive of Bang On A Can and anyone that I could be. I've tried to be in touch with composers in that way. It's a little bit more active than just listening to the CDs that come in. It's very hard to do it that way. So I have some contact with that. I'm not in a music school or at a record company where things would be coming and I had to do it all the time, but I make an effort to do it that way. When I was in Australia last year, I did a three-day workshop with composers and what it meant is that they came in and played their music and we talked about it. I did that in Halifax, Nova Scotia, the year before that. I'm not a teacher and I always say, "Well, I don't know anything about teaching," and we sit down with composers and we go around the room and they say what they do and we come to me and say what I do and they say what they're hoping to do in a few years and I'll say, "Well, I'm hoping to..." And we talk about the music and we get rid of the hierarchy right away and then we begin listening to each other's music and I've done that every year somewhere or other. So, that's one way to do it, but I'm not an expert at this at all, but I'm curious about it. It's hard now. The difficulty is that the real challenge is thirty years ago it was very easy to see who the enemies of new music were, they were the very people who thought they were writing new music... The people that were trying to stop new music from happening were the enemies. And my generation simply, in a very short period of time, completely deflated that whole hierarchy of serious new music, except in a few countries like Germany and Austria. You know, now, as a young composer, you don't have such a simple side to join in a certain way.

FRANK J. OTERI: One of the remarkable things for me about *Einstein* has always been the guts you had to go through with it. As a young composer, it was a real inspiration for me to know that you were brave enough to rent out with Metropolitan Opera House even though you were driving a cab before and after it ran.

PHILIP GLASS: We did not rent the Met. We were invited to present *Einstein* by Jane Herman, who was in charge of special events at the Met.

FRANK J. OTERI: Where did that myth begin? It's circulated everywhere; it's even in a recent article that Joan Peyser wrote for *Opera News*.

PHILIP GLASS: It's simply not true. Jane Herman is alive and well. She lives in New York; you can call her up and ask her. She is very proud of the fact. She and another producer were sent by the Met to Europe to see Bob and I and to look at the work. Their

job was to pull in special events on Sundays when the Met was closed and they invited us to come there. That's what happened.

FRANK J. OTERI: So you didn't accrue this huge debt?

PHILIP GLASS: We did.

FRANK J. OTERI: You did?

PHILIP GLASS: But not from the Met. We accrued it from touring in Europe. We had been in Europe for three months and we had a brilliant booking agent named Nonon Karlweiss, who wanted us to play in all these places like the Fenice and the Opéra Comique in Paris, and the opera house in, all these important opera houses, but what she didn't tell us was that in order to do it, she undersold the show by about five or ten thousand dollars a night. It was the only way she could get it in, and she revealed this to Bob and I after the tour was over and she said, "Well, we have a little debt, it should be about eighty or ninety thousand dollars," and we said, "Nonan, how could you do this to us?" And, she was a very interesting woman, she wore a wig and smoked a plastic cigarette, she was ageless. I think she was eighty at the time. She was very old and she said, "It was very important for people to see the work. It was the only way to do it."

FRANK J. OTERI: Wow.

PHILIP GLASS: And she handed us the debt.

FRANK J. OTERI: Wow! So you didn't know you were getting into this.

PHILIP GLASS: No! We had no idea. We thought, we were selling out. What we didn't realize is that, which any opera person would tell you, is that opera's sell out all the time and lose money. Well, when we saw full houses, we thought we were making money. We were completely naïve. Look, the Met when it sells out is losing money.

FRANK J. OTERI: Right.

PHILIP GLASS: So how could we make any money? We just didn't know. So by the end of a three-month tour, and you have to remember this was a long time ago, we had a \$90,000 debt, which would be something like \$300,000 today.

FRANK J. OTERI: That's so funny though because as a young composer, hearing this story, I thought, "Wow. This is such a brave story of this composer who's taken this risk..."

PHILIP GLASS: Well, what I did do, I rented Carnegie Hall in '79, but that wasn't such a big deal. And I sold it out and I paid for it. So that story of the Met actually happened at Carnegie in '79.

FRANK J. OTERI: So, what would be your advice to somebody now trying to make a big splash that way?

PHILIP GLASS: First of all, modeling other people's work doesn't work. The model for me was to develop an independent outfit of some kind. I have my own publishing company. We're sitting in a studio that has been built by myself and my colleagues, people who work for me. So, you can say it's my studio. We have a publishing company, a studio, we have a record company, plus the record companies we have deals with. I've never had help from anyone in the foundation world or the music world. I never had a Guggenheim. I never had a MacArthur. I never had anything. Oh, that's not quite true. In 1969, I got three thousand dollars from the New York State Council of the Arts. It wasn't even a whole grant; they gave me half a grant.

FRANK J. OTERI: Wow.

PHILIP GLASS: That's all I got.

FRANK J. OTERI: Wow.

PHILIP GLASS: Then fifteen years later in 1981, '84 rather, twenty years maybe? No, fifteen years later, I got some money for copying from the Rockefeller Foundation to copy *Akhmaten*. I got no other money ever from anybody. So, my feeling was that it was a waste of time. The reason I didn't get the money is that at a certain point I realized I was spending time, I had a very wonderful group of people called Arts Services, Mimi Johnson ran it with some other people, and they would spend time making applications to foundations. So one year, I think it was around 1971, '72, and Mimi said to me, "You know, Philip, it's time to make the applications." She said, "Why don't we just skip it?" And I said, "You know, we have better things to do, let's forget about it." And we never applied after that and we never got anything either. So, first of all, my way of doing it was to make a living my own way. I had a very simple scheme with the Ensemble, which anyone can do. I realized that if I had twenty concerts a week, I had twenty paychecks a week, I paid unemployment, and the Ensemble members could get unemployment checks for the other 26 weeks. Everybody who worked for me had a paycheck every week, but I had to get the twenty weeks. I had to get up to twenty weeks. And, by '75 or '76, I went up to 20 weeks. I had 20 concerts a year. Once I had 20 concerts a year, I didn't have to worry about grants.

FRANK J. OTERI: Wow. But of course now you get commissions to do these fabulous operas and symphonies.

PHILIP GLASS: Yeah, but that doesn't support the Ensemble. The Ensemble still supports itself from playing.

FRANK J. OTERI: That's fantastic.

PHILIP GLASS: Well, what I did is, I looked at what was there and I said, "These people aren't going to give me any money. I don't want to ask people for permission to play my music, 'cuz they're not going to let me do it anyway. I don't want to be in that position. I'm just not interested in it. I wasn't interested in applying for grants then... They had these panels of composers who clearly just weren't interested and I said, "Forget it, I'm not going to do that." So I began thinking about how you survive. So I started my own publishing company. I started my own ensemble. We began working very hard at performing and, I mean, it took a long time. Is this the way to do it? I don't know. I don't know. You have to have a lot of energy because you'll be working. I worked. I had day jobs until I was 41.

FRANK J. OTERI: Wow.

PHILIP GLASS: Some people think that's very encouraging; some people think that's very discouraging. I'm always interested in their reaction... Some people said, "Oh, that's wonderful!" because it means that they have that time. They think, "Well, it took Philip to be 41 'til he made a living and I'm 35, so I'm not doing that bad... yet." And other people, when they get discouraged, say, "I didn't think it was going to take that long!" I don't know. I don't know what to tell people to do. I think the main thing that I tell my son who is a composer... who is a songwriter... I tell anybody, the main thing is to love the work that you do because you may get no other reward. And if you don't need any other reward except the satisfaction of the music, then you're always winning. And that was true for me when I was 30. I was out playing music and I thought I was successful when I was 30! I had an audience. I had an ensemble. I was going from city to city playing music. I couldn't make a living, but that was not the issue for me. People always say, "Well, when were you successful?" and I say, "Well, I always thought I was!" They said, "No, no, when did you make money?" "Oh! Much later."

FRANK J. OTERI: In the wake of the terrible things that just happened and are still playing out in the world right now, what are your feelings vis à vis creating a musical response?

PHILIP GLASS: I'm doing this concert tonight as a benefit concert for the Children's Health Unit that is involved with helping children who are victims of this attack. You know, if you go back to operas such as *Satyagraha*, which is about social change through non-violence, I've been involved with social issues for a long time. What I'm seeing is not very encouraging. I was talking to my son yesterday, this morning about it and I said, "Well, you might be seeing this for the rest of your life." This kind of violence against civilians, violence against people, murderers hiding behind ideological and religious ideas... Basically, they're murderers. There's no other way... Any divine being worth a salt doesn't order people to go out and kill other people. That just doesn't happen. We're talking about people who are interested in killing people. So, this is what we have. What do I think about it? In terms of the work, I go on doing what I'm doing. We're happy to be out playing now; people want to hear music now. Music making and music listening and art-making and art encounters are very healing experiences because they're basically about positive things or about the positive elements of our life. It's about our perceptions

and our experiences. It's about what makes you aware of the immediacy and simplicity and interconnectedness of our life is what you see in art. So that it's a wonderful time to have the vocation of the artist because probably that vocation will be more appreciated than ever. I think that in a way, I think that's what I'm saying. We were playing in South America the day after. We were in Brazil, and people came to me after the concert and said, "We want to thank you for playing. We really couldn't stand to watch it anymore. And just coming out and hearing music was the best thing we could do." So we have this, music has, and art in general, it has a way, it automatically connects people to people. 'Cuz that's what it is. That's what it is. The kind of violence we're seeing is the opposite of that. It's not connecting with people. It's destroying relationships; it's not about building relationships. So, we're talking about something which is innately, inwardly, continually, and eternally positive. The actions of musicians are positive things. They have no negativities to them as far as I know. In a world where there's so much negativity, it becomes a special vocation, I think, and a special time. And it's a very difficult time. Traveling now is a huge nightmare. I have to be at the airport two hours early. It's become much worse than it used to be even two weeks ago. I'm leaving at 9:30 for the airport for a twelve o'clock flight.