

FABER *ff* MUSIC

Thomas Adès

*"...One of the most accomplished and complete musicians
of his generation"*

The New York Times, 12 June 2005

THOMAS ADÈS
List of Works

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BIOGRAPHY

Born in London in 1971, Thomas Adès studied piano at the Guildhall School of Music, and read music at King's College, Cambridge. Between 1993 and 1995 he was Composer in Association with the Hallé Orchestra, which association resulted in *The Origin of the Harp* (1994), and *These Premises Are Alarmed* for the opening of The Bridgewater Hall in 1996. *Asyla* (1997) was a Feeney Trust commission for Sir Simon Rattle and the CBSO, who toured it together, and repeated it at Symphony Hall in August 1998 in Rattle's last concert as Music Director of the orchestra. Rattle subsequently programmed *Asyla* in his opening concert with the Berlin Philharmonic as Music Director in September 2002 - an occasion which was recorded on DVD and broadcast on international television and radio.

Adès' first opera, *Powder Her Face* (commissioned by Almeida Opera for the Cheltenham Festival in 1995), has been performed all round the world, has been televised by Channel Four, and is available on an EMI CD. Adès' second opera, *The Tempest*, was commissioned by The Royal Opera and was premiered there under the baton of the composer to great critical acclaim in February 2004.

Thomas Adès' music has attracted numerous awards and prizes, including the Paris Rostrum for the best piece by a composer under 30 (*Living Toys*, 1994); the 1997 Royal Philharmonic Society Prize for *Asyla*; the Elise L Stoecker Prize for *Arcadiana* (New York, 1998); the Salzburg Easter Festival Prize (1999); the Munich Ernst von Siemens Prize for Young Composers (1999); the 2000 Grawemeyer Award for *Asyla* (the largest international prize for composition, here awarded to the youngest recipient); the Hindemith Prize (2001), and the 2005 Royal Philharmonic Society Prize for *The Tempest*.

Adès is in demand worldwide as a conductor and pianist. As well as being a renowned interpreter of his own music, his performances and recordings of composers including Kurtág, Janáček, Nancarrow, Schumann, Schubert, Ruders, Tchaikovsky and Gerald Barry have been critically acclaimed. He performs regularly in collaboration with artists including Ian Bostridge and the Belcea Quartet and has conducted many orchestras including the BBC Symphony Orchestra, the Orchestre National de Radio France, the Danish Radio Symphony Orchestra and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, and ensembles including the London Sinfonietta, Ensemble Modern, the Athelas Ensemble and the Birmingham Contemporary Music Group. Adès has an exclusive contract with EMI Classics as composer, pianist and conductor, for whom he has recorded music by composers including Janáček, Schubert, Castiglioni, Stravinsky, Grieg and Busoni, as well as almost all of his own music. Adès has been Artistic Director of the Aldeburgh Festival since 1999.

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INTRODUCTION TO THE MUSIC OF THOMAS ADÈS

There are two kinds of composers, those who like a wide range of music, and those who only really like their own. Thomas Adès readily admits he's in the first category: "There's not many people I don't like ... I like to have lots of different colours and the atmosphere of other music. That opera [*Powder Her Face*] is full of little bits of atmosphere that are sort of sprayed on it from other music", he comments. It's also true that there are not many people who don't like the music of Thomas Adès. With sponsors such as Sir Simon Rattle, the London Sinfonietta and Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, and praise from such diverse authorities as Richard Taruskin, Christopher Fox and Roger Scruton, Adès has had a meteoric rise to both international popularity and serious critical acclaim.

Born in 1971, Adès' most obvious early musical talent was as a pianist – he won Second Prize in the 1989 BBC Young Musician of the Year. He studied composition with Robert Saxton and read music at Cambridge, during which time his Opus 1, *Five Eliot Landscapes*, appeared (1990). *Living Toys* (Op. 9, 1993), commissioned for the London Sinfonietta, depicts a child's dreams in five balletic movements; *Arcadiana* (Op. 12, 1994), was his first string quartet. *Powder Her Face* (Op. 14), premiered in 1995, brought real international recognition. A "cabaret opera" in eight scenes with "numbers", for chamber forces, it is nonetheless through-composed on the model of Berg and Britten. Steamy and often blackly comic, the opera is based on the life of the Duchess of Argyll, and is eclectic and fast-moving; its sexual content gained some notoriety. The composer's first large-scale orchestral work was for Rattle's CBSO, the symphonic *Asyla* (Op. 17, 1997) – plural of "asylum", suggesting both refuge and madhouse – with the large orchestra featuring six percussionists and two pianists, one playing an upright tuned a quarter-tone flat. *America – A Prophecy* (Op. 19, 1999) is an apocalyptic 15-minute work for mezzo-soprano, chorus and orchestra, whose subject is the Spanish destruction of Mayan culture. *The Tempest*, the composer's second opera, based on Shakespeare's play, was premiered at Covent Garden in 2004. It is his most ambitious and profound composition to date, and marks a purification of his style.

Adès has been compared to Benjamin Britten as a youthful prodigy, and for his operatic achievements – in his case, two operas composed by the age of 32. Like Britten's, his music is highly communicative, and he is not a radical avantgardist, while his partnership as pianist with singer Ian Bostridge has been regarded as having parallels that of Britten and Peter Pears. However, Adès is at best ambivalent about these echoes, and has commented that he doesn't want to think of himself as "an English composer" – meaning the insular, pastoral tradition. The style is incredibly complex on the surface, but brilliant also, with sufficient traditional melodic and rhythmic virtues and contemporary cross-cultural references to attract ordinary listeners. As musicologist Richard Taruskin put it in an article in the *New York Times*, Adès has "precocious technical sophistication and an omnivorous range of references"; but while he has been labelled a postmodernist, Taruskin sees him rather as a late modernist. Certainly, however, audiences find it easier to respond to his music than Harrison Birtwistle's, let alone Brian Ferneyhough's or Helmut Lachenmann's.

The issue is worth pursuing. High modernism sees itself as a rigorously progressive and deeply serious development of classical tradition. Postmodernism is pluralist, and more playful and accessible. But Adès' work shows how these distinctions are increasingly hard to sustain. Adès is in many ways a quite traditional composer in his attitude to musical resources and technology. He has no great love of extended instrumental techniques such as those exploited by Sciarrino or Lachenmann – jazzy effects are another matter – and unlike Mark-Anthony Turnage, for instance, he is not interested in combining composition and improvisation. He has visited IRCAM, but believes that computer-generated music lacks a human feel; Conlon Nancarrow, a particular favourite, is for him one of the greatest of American composers, but in the player-piano music, "the machine is sort of human". Yet while Adès' music is very knowing and allusive, and highly sophisticated, its underlying seriousness is at odds with the playfulness of postmodernism. Reference to earlier styles and composers is at the level of formal construction as well as literal quotation or interpolation – homages (or anti-homages) with depth, not mere pastiche. For instance, in *Brahms* he is engaged in a profound anti-homage to Brahms, not merely quoting surface

features of his style. Adès is not an iconoclast or even, essentially, a satirist. He doesn't suffer from what Harold Bloom called "the anxiety of influence", and wants to celebrate the traditions he loves. From Schoenberg, Berg and Stravinsky to Berio, Crumb and Kagel, composers in the 20th century have confronted the canon through quotation and recomposition, and Adès is continuing that response. It's been said that Adès doesn't leave quotation marks round his references, but still, his considerable wit is put to the service of an Auden-like irony.

In the great range of cultural and literary references of all kinds that the composer makes, there's a permeable boundary between high and popular arts, and frequent transitions to popular modes stands out. Sometimes these don't entirely convince – the Billie Holiday tribute of *Life Story* (Op. 8b) or club music in *Asyla*, perhaps. But this is an almost impossible trick for classical composers to pull off; a classical singer's training, for instance, is antithetical to Holiday's art, and the effect, whether intended or not, is satirical. The influence of the Argentine creator of nuevo tango, Astor Piazzolla, pervasive in *Powder Her Face*, for instance in the tango feel of the Overture and the "Ghost Epilogue", is more deeply felt. Yet Adès rejects the pluralism of postmodernism, and his style is defined and immediately recognisable. His music shows great attention to detail and is subtly-fashioned – Adès has a fantastic ear and is in fact a great mimic – yet these intricacies aren't indulged in merely for their own sake. Mercurial changes of musical mood are a hallmark, and Adès' love of polymetric and polyrhythmic complexity means that the music is busy but in effect metre-less for long periods; he is endlessly inventive in the creation of ensembles within the orchestra. There are painterly as well as narrative tendencies, with registral extremes used to achieve spatial effects, as for instance in *Living Toys*.

The dream-world of that piece - one of the composer's most popular - reflects a surrealist tendency that often informs Adès' music, though it is put to less savage ends than in that great 20th century surrealist, György Ligeti. So it was not surprising that he should feel attracted to the world of *The Tempest* in order to make his most profound artistic statement. The opera marks a stylistic simplification, and perhaps an emotional cooling, from the hectic invention, eclecticism and expressionism of early Adès - there could no complaint now of a chameleon-like tendency to assume rapidly changing compositional personae. It was a risk for Meredith Oakes to write a libretto in rhyming couplets, but the score's freedom gives no hint of this, while the humanising of the character of Caliban was a bold stroke. It will be fascinating to hear how, having gathered strength after this Herculean effort, Adès develops next. If the claim that his is the music of the future is too grandiose, it is certainly a key contribution to one of the central responses to modernism.

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OPERA

Powder Her Face Op 14 (1995)

chamber opera in two acts and eight scenes for four singers and 15 players

Duration 115 minutes

Libretto by Philip Hensher (Eng)

Instrumentation: 3 cl(I=ssax+bass sax.

II=asax+blc.III= bcl+ cbcl+swanee whistle) - hn.tpt.trbn - perc(1): hi-hat/2 susp.cym/SD/vibraslap/BD/wash board/cabaca/lion's roar/cyms/pop gun/large fishing reel/t.bells/tam-t/ flexatone/wdbl/3 brake drum/3tpl.bl/BD+foot ped/bongo/2 timb/siz.cym/guiro/rototom/ electric bell/rattle/swanee whistle/crockery or wood.glass.shell.metal chimes crushed together/ whip - harp - pno - accordion -

2 vln.vla.vlc.db

Cast: *Duchess*: soprano; *Hotel Manager*: bass; *Electrician*: tenor; *Maid*: soprano

Commissioned by Almeida Opera

FP: 1.7.95, Cheltenham Festival, Everyman Theatre, Cheltenham: Valdine Anderson/Roger Bryson/Jill Gomez/Niall Morris/Almeida Opera/Brad Cohen; David Farr (dir)

Libretto 0-571-51611-4 , Vocal score 0-571-51730-7 on sale, full score and parts for hire

The Tempest Op 22 (2003-4)

opera in 3 acts

Duration 122 minutes

Libretto by Meredith Oakes after Shakespeare (Eng)

Instrumentation: 3(II & III=picc.)3 (III=ca)

3 (I&II=Bb, III in A=bcl)3 (III=cbsn) - 4.3.3 (III=btrbn).1 - timp - perc (2 or 3) - upright pno - harp (act 3 only) - strings (some basses with extensions to B)

Cast: *Prospero*: high baritone, *Ariel*: high soprano, *Caliban*: tenor, *Miranda*: mezzo-soprano, *Ferdinand*: tenor, *King*: tenor, *Antonio*: tenor, *Stefano*: bass-baritone, *Trinculo*: counter-tenor, *Sebastian*: baritone, *Gonzalo*: bass-baritone, *Court*: SATB chorus

Commissioned by the Royal Opera House

FP: 10.2.04: Royal Opera House, London: The Royal Opera/Orchestra of the Royal Opera House/Thomas Adès; Tom Cairns (dir)

Libretto 0-571-523374 on sale, vocal score, full score and parts for hire

Powder Her Face

"... one of the most striking new operas I have seen in years... a composer of masterful technique. From the tango of the overture to the tango of the close, one is on the edge of one's seat trying to catch as much as possible of the prolific, fast-altering, vividly etched and instrumentally outrageous detail of a score which is boiling with life."

The Sunday Times (Paul Driver), 9 July 1995

"... dazzlingly precocious... a staggeringly brilliant addition to the ranks of contemporary music theatre...(Adès) boasts few contemporary rivals on either side of the Atlantic."

San Francisco Examiner (Allan Ulrich), April 1997

"Adès' inventive panache is irresistible, and his orchestration magical."

The Daily Telegraph (Rupert Christiansen) 16 June 1999

"...Events career by so rapidly, and the music changes tack so effortlessly that the whole score seems miraculously coherent... Adès can make a single gesture - a slapped pizzicato bass, a piano cluster - speak as eloquently as the most complex harmonic progression... instrumental writing of a power and imagination that we haven't heard anywhere, let alone in an opera, for a long time."

The Guardian (Andrew Clements), 3 July 1995

"... Powder Her Face is the rare modern opera that has you walking out with melodies on your lips ... It is no longer fair to call him a prodigy; he has become, at the age of twenty-six, a prime mover in English music. His work has caused a nearly total capitulation of critical and popular opinion ... Adès has the extrovert panache of a great opera composer."

The New Yorker (Alex Ross), 18 August 1997

"... the piece is terrific ... it's been acclaimed in Adès' native England as one of the best operas of the 90s. Its US stage premiere showed why."

USA Today (David Patrick Stearns), 31 July 1997

"... unfolds with a vitality and assurance that proclaim a born master."

The Atlantic Monthly (Austin Baer), June 1997

The Tempest

"The Tempest ... is a masterpiece of airy beauty and eerie power... Adès discovers a glowing new lyric voice ... The epiphany not only of the opera but perhaps of his entire career to date comes in Caliban's aria "Friends don't fear" ... This is ravishing music in purest A major, though the notes of the scale blend together in ever-changing, shimmering combinations. The effect is of light flooding the scene, of warmth rushing in ...

The New Yorker (Alex Ross), 1 March 2004

"Characterisation, vocal and dramatic, is vivid and some of the gossamer harmonies Adès has invented for Prospero's strange island and its inhabitants... bewitch the ear with their captivating tonal shimmer. Adès does not shirk the traditional big operatic moments. There is a thrilling and moving quintet of reconciliation and he gives each of his main characters an imposing and impressive aria... these are expressed in music of extraordinary imaginative power ... The Tempest should be spell-binding and that is what Adès has made it... It's a must."

The Sunday Telegraph (Michael Kennedy), 15 February 2004

'... hugely impressive three-act opera... it is through restraint of means and subtle tonal adjustments that the island magic works on us. The harmony might seem tonal - and even medieval - but it is always being sea-changed. In the inventive flow, nothing is quite what it appears, partly because the sheer pressure of the flow leaves us no time to pin, say, the Act 1 trio, the Janacekian, almost Puccinian love duet in Act 2 or the Act 3 quintet to their traditional prototypes. The choral writing, too, while robustly traditional, is slotted in without calling attention to itself... I wish I could single out each one of the team that made this premiere such a triumph.'

The Sunday Times (Paul Driver), 15 February 2004

ORCHESTRAL

America - A Prophecy Op 19 (1999)

mezzo-soprano and large orchestra with optional large chorus

Duration 15 minutes

Text: (Mezzo): adapted by the composer from the books of Chilam Balam (Mayan), (Chorus): La Guerra by Matteo Flexa (Eng)

4(III+IV=picc).4.2.bcl.cbcl.4(IV=cbsn) -
4.3(I=ptpt).2 trbn.btrbn.1 - timp perc(4):
4 rototom/2 sets temple bells/SD/2 TD/6 sizes
of field drum or tom-t/BD/tam-t with rubber
ball/rattle - pno - harp - strings (16.16 (or 14)
12.10.8 players)

Commissioned as one of the Messages for the Millenium by the New York Philharmonic with generous support from the Francis Goelet Fund

FP: 11.11.99, Avery Fisher Hall, Lincoln Center, New York, USA: Beth Clayton/ New York PO/ Kurt Masur

Score 0-571-52114-2 on sale, parts for hire

Asyla Op 17 (1997)

large orchestra

Duration 25 minutes

I=ca.III=(ca).bob).3(II=bcl.III=cbcl).3(III=cbsn) -
4.3(III=ptpt).3.1 - perc(6): 5 or 6 timp/
3 or 4 rototom/5 finger.drm or bongo/
2 bellplate/tuned c.bells/4 t.bells/ch.cym/
2 hi-hat/3 tins/geophone/2 water gong/
2 ratchet/washboard/11 tuned gong/
2 susp.cym/choke cym/2 SD/sandpaper
blocks/bag of metal knives & forks/
glsp/cyms/BD/crot/BD+pedal - keyboards(2):
I=grand pno/upright pno. II=upright pno(tuned
¼ tone flat)/grand pno/cel - harp - strings

Commissioned by the John Feeney Charitable Trust for the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra

FP 1.10.97, Symphony Hall, Birmingham: CBO/Simon Rattle

Score 0-571-51863-X on sale, parts for hire

...but all shall be well Op 10 (1993)

orchestra

Duration 10 minutes

3(=picc).3(III=ca.I+II=ca ad lib).3(II=Ebcl.III=bcl).
3(III=cbsn) - 6.3(I=crt ad lib).3.1 - perc(6): timp/
6 tgl/2 sandpaper blocks/BD/2 ant.cym/mcas/
glsp/tpl.bl/vibraslap/vib/tam-t/guero/
rototom - cel - pno - harp - strings

Commissioned by CUMS to celebrate their 150th anniversary, with support from the Donald Wort CUMS Sesquicentenary Prize

FP(amateur): 12.3.94, Ely Cathedral: CUMS 1st Orchestra/Stephen Cleobury.

FP(professional): 7.10.94, Suntory Hall, Tokyo, Japan: Tokyo Metropolitan SO/Oliver Knussen

Score 0-571-51779-X on sale, parts for hire

'... Mr. Adès's arresting compositional voice comes through almost continually: his ear for pungent harmony; his layering of every-which-way contrapuntal lines, which somehow remain audible; his impish blending of diverse musical styles. The Tempest is the work of a composer who is prodigiously talented and who knows it... you are swept along by the sheer ingenuity of the music. In the final act, when Prospero conjures a vision of a heavenly feast for the hungry island captives, the beguilingly strange music, with piercingly high winds dominating the orchestra textures, sounds like some modern reimagining of a Renaissance dance. The long final scene of recognition is a skillfully rendered passacaglia (a stately dance in the form of variations on a repeated ground bass) in which a rapturously lyrical ensemble for the main characters is supported by wistful choral refrains. This is music of a young master. The Metropolitan Opera must bring this significant new work to New York.'

The New York Times (Anthony Tommasini), 23 February 2004

America - A Prophecy

"A soprano sibyl warns the nation to prepare for those who "will burn all the land, all the sky"; and then, in a mantra-like lament, she grieves for the burning and the weeping. She is met by a chorus chanting words of uncertain hope; and her voice rises, gloriously, above a vast orchestral landscape, a Babel of heavy percussion slashed by brass and screaming woodwind. This is a huge world of experience held within daringly little space. And Adès controls it by some of his most rigorous scoring and structuring to date."

The Times (Hilary Finch), 16 June 2000

"A fluent, convulsive two-movement essay, Adès' work predicts an apocalyptic end to the self-styled greatest nation on earth...Even those who cannot empathise on a political level would surely celebrate a music that is sure not only of what it wants to say, but of how it wants to say it. For America - A Prophecy also effectively censures the cheap and easy culture to which too many technically well-equipped but emotionally shallow composers, American and not, have contributed these two decades."

Evening Standard (Stephen Pettitt), 30 August 2002

"Thomas Adès stood apart from the crowd. America - A Prophecy came across not as a message but a cry of pain...Adès risked chaos in this music: it's grander and rougher than anything he has done to date, and it lacks his customary playfulness. It seems to have been written out of burning necessity."

The New Yorker (Alex Ross), 29 November 1999

"America - A Prophecy is forceful, it is thrilling. What it says, though, is shimmering and many-layered. It projects the prophet's sense of doom, but also the exaltation of the prophetic stance...In terms of the future, it seems to be saying that something momentous is coming and we do not know which side we will be on. Its expressive character, complex but precise, comes partly from an orchestral polyphony that has those same qualities...If one can take the work as a prophecy of another sort, looking forward to the Adès' projected large-scale opera, the signs are all wonderfully encouraging, looking forward to hopes and dreams indeed."

The Times Literary Supplement (Paul Griffiths), 3 December 1999

"America - A prophecy would in any circumstances be powerful. Here the parallels with the Ives made it quite overwhelming...Adès' sound-world wove magic and horror by turn, manic yet vibrant...Together they reinforced the perception of Adès as one of the most enlightened imaginations of his generation. Setting aside the word's more perturbing connotations, he is indeed a visionary."

The Guardian (Rian Evans), 30 March 2002

Asyla

"Adès' fertile invention and cunning manipulation of a mammoth ensemble have established Asyla as a work of striking originality ... Under the composer's baton its elements of propulsion and suspense were clothed in a radiant orchestral fabric."

The Daily Telegraph (Geoffrey Norris), 16 August 1999

...but all shall be well Op 10 (1993)

reduced orchestra

Duration 10 minutes

3(=picc).3(III=ca.I+II=ca ad lib). 3(II+EbcI.III=bcl).
3(III)=cbnsn - 4.3(I=crt ad lib). 2trbn.btrbn.1 -
perc(4): 6 tgl/
2 sandpaper blocks/2 mcas/BD/timp/2tpl.bl/
vibraslap/2 ant.cym/vib/guero/glsp/tam-t -
pno(=cel) harp - strings

FP: 11.6.96, Osaka, Japan: Hallé Orchestra/
Kent Nagano

Score and parts for hire

Brahms Op 21 (2001)

baritone and orchestra

Duration 5 minutes

Text: Alfred Brendel (German)

2(=picc).2.2.2(=cbnsn).cbnsn - 4230 - timp - perc(1):
tgl/high anvil/baking trays - strings

Commissioned by Vincent Meyer, on behalf of
the Philharmonia Orchestra and Christoph von
Dohnanyi on the occasion of Alfred Brendel's
70th Birthday

FP: 30.6.01, Royal Festival Hall, London:
Christopher Maltman/Philharmonia
Orchestra/Christoph von Dohnanyi

Full score and parts for hire

Scenes from *The Tempest* (2005)

soprano, mezzo-soprano, tenor, baritone and orchestra

Duration 40 minutes

Act 1 Sc. 4 & 5 and Act 2 Sc. 4 from the opera *The
Tempest* (2004)

Score and parts in preparation

These Premises are Alarmed Op 16 (1996)

orchestra

Duration 3 minutes

3picc(I=fl).3.3(II=bcl.III=EbcI).3(III=cbnsn)
4.3(III=ptpt).2 trbn(I=bass tpt). btrbn.tuba -
perc(4): crot/mar/9 large roasting tins/
hi-hat/4 field drum/ant.cym/4 gong/glsp/
2 BD/tam-t/geophone/2 wdbl/timp/3 SD/
rototom - pno(=cel) - harp - strings (16.16.14.10.8)

Written for the Hallé Orchestra for the opening
of The Bridgewater Hall

FP: 12.9.96, The Bridgewater Hall, Manchester:
Hallé Orchestra/Kent Nagano

Score 0-571-51887-7 on sale, parts for hire

Violin Concerto Op 23 (2005)

In preparation - see p 14

"It is a thrilling, original work ... The orchestra worked brilliantly to master its frenetic rhythms and eerie textures ... The effect was exuberant, noisy, disconcerting and intriguing."

The Times (Richard Morrison), 9 September 2002

"The musical language is virile and pungent. Echoes and influences...mix and meld, transformed by Adès' alchemy into a sonic landscape of ferocious beauty and constant surprises."

The Times (Geoff Brown), 16 August 1999

"Adès delights the ear...A symphony in all but name, it is totally original, uncompromisingly serious, utterly of our time and a teasing, tingling delight to the ear. This is music that orchestras are going to want to play, and audiences to hear, again and again ... Asyla represents a quantum leap. While embodying his familiar sense of adventure, fluency and invention, it does so in a weighty four-movement sequence of breathtaking confidence and scale."

Financial Times (Andrew Clark), 3 October 1997

"His music is a layering of events that shows a tremendous sophistication, from the gamelan-like clanging bells at the very opening to the wild, restless trumpet solo at the end of the first movement, to the finale...Asyla is music with an eerie, compelling beauty from a composer we will surely be hearing much from."

Star Tribune (Michael Anthony), 21 November 1997

"It is an unflinching and profound work - easy to see why Rattle is attached to it...Most of the audience were also hyperventilating as it furiously built on its own remorseless momentum."

The Guardian (Alan Rusbridger), 9 September 2002

"Adès tests extravagances in Asyla and takes the audience along as voyeurs. He plunges into his own psyche, obsessing on weird sounds, luxuriant melodies and captivating rhythms. His is inward music and music of the outside world at the same time."

Los Angeles Times (Mark Swed), 5 June 2000

"Asyla is a little masterpiece."

The Times (Richard Morrison), 31 August 1998

"A brilliantly achieved piece, in which Adès explores a sound-world whose influences range from Ligetian disjointedness to Ravelian sensualism, but which never sounds merely derivative."

The Sunday Times (Stephen Pettitt), 6 June 1999

...but all shall be well

"The work has a strikingly individual voice; every detail confirms that in his mid-twenties Adès is already a substantial figure in our musical landscape."

The Guardian (David Fallows), 1 March 1996

"...intricately scored, but open-handed in its appeal, and the first of Adès' scores I've heard to trump technical brilliance with a real, unaffected emotional statement. Not that this is heart-on-sleeve emotionality: the writing is considered...with a refined feeling for texture...I found it genuinely affecting."

The Independent on Sunday, 6 August 1995

Brahms

"Adès describes his setting as an 'anti-homage'. The vocal writing is positively operatic in its range, while the orchestra pillages Brahms' music, especially the Fourth Symphony, and fastens mercilessly onto its typical devices - the sequenced phrases, the chains of falling thirds, the whipped up rhetoric; it's profoundly subversive, and very, very clever."

The Guardian (Andrew Clements), 2 July 2001

CHAMBER MUSIC & ENSEMBLE

Arcadiana Op 12 (1994)

string quartet

Duration 21 minutes

Commissioned by the Endellion String Quartet
with funds from the Holst Foundation

FP: 16.11.94, West Road Concert Hall,
Cambridge: Endellion String Quartet

Score 0-571-515185 & parts (fp) 0571-554938 on sale

Catch Op 4 (1991)

chamber ensemble of 4 players

Duration 9 minutes

cl - pno - vln.vlc

FP: 25.11.93, St George's, Brandon Hill, Bristol:
Lynsey Marsh/Anthony Marwood/Louise
Hopkins/Thomas Adès

Piano score and parts 0-571-51897-4 on sale

Chamber Symphony Op 2 (1990)

chamber ensemble of 15 players

Duration 13 minutes

fl(=picc+af).ob.basset cl.bcl - hn.tpt(=wine
bottle).trbn - perc(2): tgl/c.bell/wdbl/SD/
hi-hat/guero/3tam-t/2 small finger drum/wood
chimes/flexatone/(belltree)/(shell chimes)/
mar/crot - pno(=accordion) - 2 vln.vla.vlc.db

FP (amateur) 24.2.91, Cambridge Festival of
Contemporary Music, West Road Concert Hall,
Cambridge: Contemporary Music Festival
Ensemble/Thomas Adès

FP (professional) 9.3.93, West Road Concert Hall,
Cambridge: BBC Philharmonic Orchestra/
Matthias Bamert

Score 0-571-51509-6 on sale, parts for hire

Concerto Conciso Op 18 (1997)

piano and chamber ensemble of 10 players

Duration 8 minutes

cl.bsax - tpt.trbn.tuba - perc(1) timp/crot/roto
toms/tuned tpl.bl/2 wood dr/ log dr/talking
dr/wood chimes/hi-hat/tam-t/anvil/ped BD -
3 vln.db (all string instruments and clarinet need
amplification, bass requires a contact
microphone)

Commissioned by Birmingham Contemporary
Music Group, London Sinfonietta and Ensemble
Modern with financial assistance from the Arts
Council of England and Sound Investors

FP: 28.10.97, Adrian Boult Hall, Birmingham:
Birmingham Contemporary Music
Group/Thomas Adès

Score and parts for hire

"The Adès, best of the lot, is a witty response to already witty words about the ghost of Brahms, and the spectre of the composer is summoned up in the warmth of Adès' orchestra. This ingenious deconstruction of Brahms leaves the ear with fleeting impressions of the great composer, only to move on swiftly every time to a piece of musical imagery suggested in the poem."

The Times (John Allison), 3 July 2001

"... Its teasing mixture of sly reminiscence and allusion is more subversive than its modest dimensions might suggest."

The Guardian (Andrew Clements), 27 February 2004

These Premises Are Alarmed

"... a complex web of sound that delights and fascinates the ear"

The Times (John Allison), 14 September 1998

"Packed with detailed, fascinating invention, Adès has devised a piece calling for the utmost, but fine-grained, virtuosity. It is also unselfconsciously, elegantly funny music - witty in the way that Scarlatti or Haydn can be."

The Observer Review (Andrew Porter), 15 September 1996

"In four fantastic minutes, it's constantly reinventing itself. Adès seemingly never reproduces the same sound twice. He has a dazzling future."

The Independent (Edward Seckerson), 14 September 1998

Arcadiana

"Adès' originality lies in his exceptional ability to absorb and transform found objects in a language that sounds like no-one else's."

Chicago Tribune (John von Rhein), 15 November 1999

"Paradise for Mr Adès is a place of complexity rather than simplistic loveliness; in fact, the idyllic and the terrifying are closely intertwined here. One moment dark, sliding string figures evoke a dance to death; the next is a serene paean to England in slow, gracefully consonant chordal passages."

The New York Times (Allan Kozinn), 29 February 1999

"Arcadiana, a suite for string quartet, includes a surpassingly lovely movement entitled 'O Albion' that bears only the slightest trace of youthful irony. Impossibly it all works. The thorniest textures are executed with extreme lucidity: the lyric stretches are genuinely tuneful; the whole weird succession of events makes perplexing sense."

The New York Times (Alex Ross), 2 July 1995

"Most importantly, the indefinable suchness of these seven portraits saves them from being pastiches. They all have an indescribable but indisputable 'layer' covering them, some smouldering or decaying process forced upon our modern minds as we try to deal with this distant stuff. All inherent sweetness in the piece seems to be penetrated with a kind of mould - always, though, expressed with a supreme instrumental virtuosity... Thus, I believe, is 'distance' achieved: like music from an ever-departing ship, where the passengers in their innocent pastimes may (or may not) know that they are doomed. Not surprisingly, these features leave slightly melancholic impressions; but also a mark of beauty, of indisputable suchness."

Per Nørgård - ISCM speech, 2002

"From the opening Venezia Notturmo, we are in a bygone world of weird spectral phenomena. The Arditti beautifully captured that aura of the ungraspable, not least in the final two movements: Albion, with its almost Mahlerian sonorities filtered through a distorting prism, and the fragmented Lethe."

The Times (Barry Millington), 23 April 2001

Catch

"Transcending its central gimmick, the work has handsome form and wit."

Los Angeles Times, 27 February 1999

Court Studies Op 23 (2005)

chamber ensemble of 4 players

Derived from The Tempest, 2004

Duration 20 minutes

cl-pno-vln-vlc

Commissioned by the Aldeburgh Festival 2005

FP: 16.06.05: Aldeburgh Festival, Jubilee Hall:
Composers Ensemble/Richard Baker

Score and parts for hire

Fool's Rhymes Op 5 (1992)

SATB chorus adn chamber ensemble of 4 players

Duration 12 minutes

Text: from sermons of John Donne & anonymous
Elizabethan and 14C nonsense poems

harp - prepared pno - organ - perc(1):
susp.cym/guiro/bongo/tgl/SD

Commissioned by the New Cambridge Singers
for the 1992 Cambridge Festival

FP: 16.7.92, Cambridge Festival, St John's College
Chapel: New Cambridge Singers/Philip Scriven

Full score, vocal score and parts for hire

Life Story Op 8 (1993)

soprano and chamber ensemble of 3 players

Duration 9 minutes

Text: Tennessee Williams (Eng)

2 bcl.db

Written for The Composers Ensemble

FP: 17.10.93, West Road Concert Hall, Cambridge
University: Mary Wiegold/Composers Ensemble
Thomas Adès

Score and parts for hire

Living Toys Op 9 (1993)

chamber ensemble of 14 players

Duration 17 minutes

1(=picc).1(=ca+sopranino recorder). 1(=Ebcl+bcl).
1(=cbsn) - 1(=whip).1(=ptpt).1.0 - perc(1):
3 gong/2 timp/2 crot/talking drum/ tgl/
2 susp.cym/suspended sheet of paper/2 c.bell/
2 tpl.bl/guiro/cast/piccolo SD/field drum/BD
(with foot ped)/vibraslap - pno - 2 vln - vla - vcl
- db

Commissioned by the Arts Council of Great
Britain for the London Sinfonietta

FP: 11.2.94, Barbican Hall, London: London
Sinfonietta/Oliver Knussen

Score 0-571-51706-4 on sale, parts for hire

"His music is arrestingly original... The theatrical element is written into the piece: a pianist, a cellist and a violinist, seated on stage, fend off the attempts of a wandering clarinettist to join them ... All the efforts are repelled, until the work's wistful yet quizzical ending ... He has an engaging voice and audacious imagination."

The New York Times (Anthony Tommasini), 27 February 1999

"... the essence of the music is not technical difficulty, but a sense of unbuttoned fun with sinister undertow... the glittering cascade of notes tossed from instrument to instrument and the sumptuous melody stitched between them inhabit a world where every texture seems freshly minted."

The Guardian (Andrew Clements), 22 February 1999

"... a one-off tour de force ... these pieces were musical mouse-traps: intricate mechanisms, eccentric but very carefully determined, which in due course sprang the traps that were their point. Very clever exercises, and original; the fine-spun detail answers perfectly to his guiding intentions ... he is evidently a special talent."

Financial Times (David Murray), 26 July 1994

Chamber Symphony

"... Adès' own wonderful concoction, his Chamber Symphony, a work that reveals all his own extraordinary Ivesian or Schnittkeesque gifts for weaving parody and mimicry, subliminal echoes and ingenious borrowings, into a voice that is uniquely and fabulously his own. Chamber Symphony remains one of his best works..."

The Independent (Roderic Dunnett), 21 October 1998

"Adès' Chamber Symphony contains much to wonder at - the infallible ear for colour, the apparently effortless command of structure, the sly, teasing melodic invention."

The Guardian (Andrew Clements), 21 October 1998

"One highlight ... was the Chamber Symphony of newcomer Thomas Adès. A complicated percussion phrase ran through the centre like a repeating melody, creating rhythmic interplay as the other instruments stepped in. The texture was quite sparse but the sounds glided, looped and bubbled in a shapely, fluid continuum."

The Independent (Meredith Oakes), 28 July 1993

Concerto Conciso

"a tour de force, a vertiginous ride through a wild, wonderful musical landscape."

The Guardian (Andrew Clements), 1 November 1997

"...dense with original ideas, often rumbustious in improvisational low-jazzy style, and yet tautly shaped and organised...this 'pendant' has the depth of a first-water gem...This clever, formidably resourceful piece crowned - or 'capped', at least: it has no grandiose airs - what was anyway a terrific programme, reflecting Adès' fastidious taste."

Financial Times (David Murray), 30 October 1997

"Though only 26, he has an old-world ability to create an audience buzz of excitement about the new in music...he has already explored keyboard texture and sonority with bristling insight; in the Concerto Conciso, given its London premiere at the weekend, he combines those strengths with the clarity and punch he demonstrated in These Premises are Alarmed... It is a pithy work, and one of formidable rhythmic complexity... The drama of Concerto Conciso is intense, its whirlwind impact galvanising."

The Daily Telegraph (Geoffrey Norris), 18 November 1997

Life Story

"Thomas Adès sets Tennessee Williams' chronicle of pillow talk during a one-night stand to music that curls and stings like cigarette smoke."

Newsday (Justin Davidson), 12 January 1999

"...the sexy, high-attitude Life Story ... is about getting to know a stranger you've just had sex with...it shows how effortlessly Adès crosses boundaries between serious and vernacular music that others have found unbridgeable. It's enough to leave you eager for more."

USA Today (David Patrick Stearns), 24 July 1997

The Origin of the Harp

Op 13 (1994)

chamber ensemble of 10 players

Duration 9 minutes

3 cl(II+III=bcl) - perc(1): 3 susp.cym/siz.cym/
2 windchimes/BD/2 pair med marimba mallets
+ small rattlesattached/7 gong/mar/2 ped
rototom/timp/marimbula/pno -3 vla.3 vlc
(III=rain stick)

Commissioned by the Hallé Orchestra

FP: 6.10.94, Free Trade Hall, Manchester:
Ensemble from Hallé Orchestra/Thomas Adès

Score 0-571-51811-7 on sale, parts for hire.

Piano Quintet Op 20 (2000)

piano quintet

Duration 20 minutes

pno - 2 vln.vla.vlc

Commissioned by the Melbourne Festival

FP: 29.10.01, Australia, Melbourne Festival:
Thomas Adès/Arditti Quartet

Score and parts for hire

Sonata da Caccia Op 11 (1993)

chamber ensemble of 3 players

Duration 14 minutes

baroque ob or ob - hn - harpsichord

Commissioned by the BBC

FP: 19.4.94, UK, BBC Pebble Mill, Birmingham:
Birmingham Contemporary Music
Group/Thomas Adès

Score and parts for hire

INSTRUMENTAL

Darknesse Visible (1992)

piano

Duration 7 minutes

FP: October 1992, Recital Hall, Franz Lizst's
House, Budapest, Hungary: Thomas Adès
0-571-51804-4 on sale

Still Sorrowing Op 7 (1991-2)

piano

Duration 9 minutes

Commissioned by the Park Lane Group with
funds from the London Arts Board

FP 11.1.93, Park Lane Group, Young Concert
Artists Platform, Purcell Room, London: Thomas
Adès

B3 facsimile (fp) 0-571-55246-3 on sale

"... a deft setting of Tennessee Williams' reflections on post-coital pillow chat ... for the unlikely but effective combination of two bass clarinets, double-bass, and a soprano recommended to take the late Billie Holiday as her model ... 'Vehement and exhausted' is his expression mark. But the handling is light, cunning and relaxed."

The Observer (Andrew Porter), January 1994

Living Toys

"Thomas Adès is unmistakably embarked on a brilliant career... he impresses effortlessly and the music he writes has rare and tautly disciplined imagination... Living Toys, a Sinfonietta commission, proved a remarkable essay. It is remarkable for its intricate facture (it is notated with meticulous yet never over-fussy precision; for its bizarrely effective scoring; and for its crabbed but powerful coherence of form...The work had a wonderfully dense, dynamic impact."

The Sunday Times (Paul Driver), 20 February 1994

"Twenty-two is a rather young age to be writing a symphonie fantastique, which is what Adès' realisation of a child's dream, with its Berlioz-like obsession with nightmare military marches, grotesque deaths, and funeral cortèges, amounts to. But Adès carries the whole thing off brilliantly."

Financial Times (Stephen Pettitt), 24 August 1997

"...an overwhelming onslaught of invention...Like Strauss, Mr Adès can weave disparate materials into an entrancing musical story."

The New York Times (Alex Ross), 25 November 1995

The Origin of the Harp

"Adès' brilliantly accomplished short work, The Origin of the Harp ... evokes a painting of a love-lorn water nymph being changed into a harp, but does nothing so obvious as deploy an actual harp. The music is as subtle and elliptical as a Sibelius tone-poem."

The Sunday Times (Paul Driver), 11 December 1994

"The instrumentation might suggest something dark and lugubrious, but it is a luminous score, full of colour and melody. Its aquatic imagery mirrors a Celtic myth of a water nymph whom the gods transform into a harp. At first, the phrases lap like gentle waves, then writhe and tumble. It is good to hear a new piece that is so purely enjoyable without being backward-looking."

The Daily Telegraph (Brian Hunt), 27 June 1995

"There was a more organic transformation in Thomas Adès' The Origin of the Harp. His sumptuous chromaticism and dense polyphony coalesced into a vibrant shimmer of strummed strings accompanying an impassioned cello melody. Adès himself conducted with pleading intensity."

The Guardian (Tom Service), 1 February 2000

"The score that really showed where Adès is heading is The Origin of the Harp. The music captures the aura of Celtic mythology in the Daniel Maclise painting that inspired it, but with a broad palette also featuring the mbira (African thumb piano) and a rainstick, this was a mesmerising performance."

The Times (John Allison), 1 February 2000

Piano Quintet

"Extraordinarily intricate in rhythm and harmony, the piece almost constantly moves on two - and sometimes five - different metrical feet at the same time... while passing with sublime, quirky ease through regions of consonance unhitched from regular keys... One might think of a weird and complex contraption that yet succeeds in flying with grace... The Piano Quintet is a piece with its own personality... the audience was glimpsing a work it will be living with."

The New York Times (Paul Griffiths), 29 June 2002

Traced Overhead Op 15 (1995-96)

piano

Duration 12 minutes

Commissioned by Imogen Cooper and the Cheltenham International Festival with partial funding from the Arts Council of England

FP: 20.7.96, Cheltenham International Festival, Pittville Pump Room, Cheltenham: Imogen Cooper

Score 0-571-51700-5 on sale

Under Hamelin Hill Op 6 (1992)

chamber organ (1-3 players)

Duration 8 minutes

FP: 29.7.92, Ely Cathedral: Thomas Adès/
Charles Armstrong/James Martin

Score on special sale from the Hire Library

VOCAL

America - A Prophecy Op 19 (1999)

mezzo-soprano and large orchestra with optional large chorus

see under *Orchestral*

Brahms Op 21 (2001)

baritone and orchestra

see under *Orchestral*

Five Eliot Landscapes Op 1 (1990)

soprano and piano

Duration 15 minutes

Text: TS Eliot (Eng)

FP (BBC recording): 25.2.93, London: Valdine Anderson/Thomas Adès.

FP (concert): 23.7.94, Almeida Theatre, London: Valdine Anderson/Thomas Adès

B3 facsimile score (fp) 0-571-55337-0 on sale

Life Story Op 8 (1993)

soprano and chamber ensemble of 3 players

See under *Chamber Music/Ensemble*

Life Story Op 8a (1994)

soprano and piano

Duration 9 minutes

Text Tennessee Williams (Eng)

Arrangement made for Sarah Leonard and Richard Rodney Bennett

FP: 8.7.94, Warwick Festival: Sarah Leonard/
Richard Rodney Bennett

Score 0-571-51517-7 on sale

"... this work has the density of a much longer, multi-movement work... When the irrational metrics are withheld in the recapitulation, there is a liberating effect that sends the music soaring out of any notional neoclassicism into true and original beauty. It was a staggering performance."

The Sunday Times (Paul Driver), 30 June 2002

"Thomas Adès invents a parallel universe... In outline, this piece corresponds to the plan of many classical and romantic first movements: there is a repeated exposition of material, which is then developed and reprised in the work's final section. Yet this design is not used with neoclassical irony... What is surprising about this piece is the immediacy of its melodies. But this directness is offset by the way they are treated... The music is elusive and never stable, and creates a parallel universe in which everything, even time itself, is relative. Yet for all its fluid unpredictability, the structure is precisely controlled..."

The Guardian (Tom Service), 24 June 2002

Sonata da Caccia

"It was good to hear again Thomas Adès' Sonata da Caccia... its performance was a delicious combination of po-faced gravitas and tongue-in-cheek humour."

The Birmingham Post (Terry Grimley), 31 January 2000

"... Couperin astonishingly deranged in his own Sonata da Caccia for oboe, horn and harpsichord, an awkward trio that Adès magically makes sound lucidly natural".

The Independent (Keith Potter), July 1999

"... designed as a homage to Couperin; it veers between baroque elegance and "contemporary" exuberance, with regulation baroque gestures alternating with wilder flourishes and occasional "wrong-note" cadences."

The Guardian (Andrew Clements), 21 April 1994

Darknesse Visible

"... a magnificently detailed solo piano work in the style of Britten's Lachrymae and Nocturnal: a modern deconstruction of a Dowland song."

The New York Times (Allan Kozinn), 11 December 1997

"In Adès' melancholic re-imagining of John Dowland's In Darkeness Let Mee Dwell, the highs and lows of musical emotion are unmasked and wide open ... Like in a Stanley Kubrick thriller, the tension in the air could be cut with a knife."

The Spectrum (Benjamin Siegel), 26 January 2004

"... a haunting meditation in which the prescence of John Dowland is clearest where the music seems least like him: a magical illusion as well as a moving homage."

Gramophone (Michael Oliver), June 1997

Still Sorrowing

"A piece that stood in a tradition of lacrimal writing you could trace back to the English lutenists ... Still Sorrowing is an accomplished enough creation to make any serious listener sit up and take note."

The Independent on Sunday (Michael White), 17 January 1993

"... a major talent from whom we expect much... The multi-faceted conception of this piece uncovered a poetic fantasy in free flight."

The Guardian (Meiron Bowen), 15 January 1993

"... this early Ades piece was both mournful and magical, the calling card of a composer with a formidable aural imagination."

The Times (Geoff Brown), 26 April 2001

"... over the pattering middle register a treble line sparkles, ripples or tings, while the bass murmurs, tolls, holds deep pedal notes. This is inventive piano writing and imaginative new music - flowing, metrically intricate, arresting. A delicate refrain traced at the start is transfigured at the close... I look forward to hearing the piece again, and more of Adès."

The Observer (Andrew Porter), 17 January 1993

"An imaginative exploration and a tentative dialogue of light but sinewy textures..."

The Daily Telegraph (Geoffrey Norris), 16 January 1993

The Lover in Winter (1989)

four songs for countertenor and piano
Duration 8 minutes
Text: Anonymous (Latin)
FP: July 1989, Guildhall School of Music & Drama: William Turner/Steven Neugarten
Score on special sale from the Hire Library

CHORAL

The Fayrfax Carol (1997)

SATB divisi with optional organ
Duration 5 minutes
Text: 15th Century Anonymous: (Eng)
Commissioned by King’s College, Cambridge for The Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols, through the generosity of Mr Vincent
FP: 24.12.97, King’s College, Cambridge: Choir of King’s College, Cambridge/Stephen Cleobury
Score: 0-571-51835-4 on sale

Fool’s Rhymes Op 5 (1992)

SATB chorus adn chamber ensemble of 4 players
Duration 12 minutes

See under Chamber Ensemble

Gefriolsae Me Op 3b (1990)

anthem for male voices and organ
Duration 3 minutes
Text: Psalm 51 (Anglo Saxon)
FP: 24.10.90, King’s College Chapel, Cambridge: King’s College Choir/Stephen Cleobury
Score on special sale from the Hire Library

January Writ (1999)

SATB (divisi) and organ
Duration 5 minutes
Text: Ecclesiastes 6.6 (Eng)
Commissioned by the Honourable Society of the Inner Temple for the Millennium Celebrations of the Temple Church
FP: 20.1.00, Temple Church, London: Temple Church Choir/Stephen Layton
Score 0-571-52036-7 on sale

O thou who didst with pitfall and with gin Op 3a (1990)

anthem for male voices
Duration 6 minutes
Text: from the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam translated by Edward Fitzgerald (Eng)
FP: 25.7.94, Chester Festival: Britten Singers/ Simon Wright
Score on special sale from the Hire Library

“... delicately and unsensationally beautiful, and as far as I could tell, not a borrowed idea in the whole thing.”
The Independent (Scarpia), 14 January 1993

Traced Overhead

“Mr Adès is a composer shaped by his ability to perform. He is an extraordinary pianist and seems to relish his instrument for its versatile beauties. In Traced Overhead, skittering, rippling textures are interrupted by stabs of treble”.
The New York Times (Bernard Holland), 1 May 1998

“As the title suggests, precisely calculated overtones - those that result from, say, half-peddalling or quarter-peddalling certain harmonies at a given point - are a structural dimension of the work as well as an element of colouring... Imogen Cooper gave a first performance which was not only meticulously prepared but also highly poetic in sound, and in a subliminal way, profoundly melodious. Although you could not actually hear the melodies in the sense that they emerged in distinct lines, you knew they were there. Given the sonorities arising from Adès’ inspired piano writing in Traced Overhead, who needs electronics?”
The Times (Gerald Larner), 23 July 1996

Under Hamelin Hill

“An exuberant evocation of the Pied Piper. ...”
American Record Guide, Nov/Dec 1997
“... includes everything from Minimalist repetitive figuration and swirling effects to eerie atmospheric writing that recalls Louis and Bebe Barron’s score for ‘Forbidden Planet’.”
The New York Times (Allan Kozinn), 11 December 1997

Five Eliot Landscapes

“... a music that seems formed by instinct as much as technique. In ‘Usk’, the third movement, some repeated piano notes create a cloudy bubble of a sound that rises up to meet the soprano’s singing. At some mysterious point in this process, we get the impression that the notes have slipped their moorings and what we have is raw sound to make its emotional impact.”
The Toronto Star (Peter Goddard), 30 April 1998
“This is perhaps the most impressive Op 1 since Alban Berg’s Piano Sonata...”
USA Today (David Patrick Stearns), 24 July 1997
“... alternately dense, heroic and amusing. Picking high, piping tones out of thin air at will, Valdine Anderson squinted at the sun on a high C to the phrase ‘lift your eyes’, glided with lovely freedom over a chromatic melisma on the word ‘soar’; and gamely twittered armour-breasted birdcalls at Wagnerian volume.”
The Globe and Mail (Elissa Poole), 4 May 1998

The Lover in Winter

The rest of the disc is no less captivating, from the austere beauty of The Lover in Winter, a song cycle for countertenor based on medieval Latin texts ...”
San Francisco Chronicle (Joshua Kosman), 21 March 2004

The Lover in Winter is as sensuous as anything in early Berg (it reminded me at times of the Seven Early Songs, which are similarly rapturous) whilst maintaining a Tippett-like clarity.”
MusicWeb (Tony Haywood), 27 February 2004

ARRANGEMENTS

Couperin: Les baricades mistérieuses (1994)

chamber ensemble of 5 players

Duration 4 minutes

cl.bcl - vla.vlc.db

FP: 18.8.84, Dartington International Summer
School: Composers Ensemble

Score and parts for hire

Madness: Cardiac Arrest (1995)

chamber ensemble of 7 players

Duration 3 minutes

cl.bcl - pno duet - vla.vlc.db

FP: 25.6.95: Meltdown, Purcell Room, London:
Composers Ensemble

Score and parts for hire

STOP PRESS

Violin Concerto Op 23 (2005)

violin and chamber orchestra

Duration 17-20 mins

2222 - 3211 - perc(2): BD/tam-t/metal block/
cymbal - strings (10.8.6.5.3)

Commissioned by the Berliner Festspiele and by
the Los Angeles Philharmonic.

FP: 4.9.05: Berliner Festspiele: Kammermusiksaal,
Berlin: Anthony Marwood/Chamber Orchestra
of Europe/Thomas Adès

Life Story (soprano & piano)

"... it is the dark, searching piano that adds pity and bleakness to turn this into a riveting
miniature opera."

Gramophone (Michael Oliver), June 1997

"Mr Adès conveys the tale through piano music with an incisive harmonic edge and a sharp
sense of irony, and vocal writing that has the accent of jazz and theatre music."

The New York Times (Allan Kozinn), 11 December 1997

Gefriolsae Me

"Its plaintive longing for release from 'bloodguiltiness' is moving and genuinely expressive.
The composition's sparseness and economy of means have precedents in a variety of musical
styles, but this setting seems personal and original."

American Record Guide, March/April 1999

"A dark-hued choral anthem ... makes a particular impact."

The Observer (Fiona Maddocks), 22 March 1998

January Writ

"... the austere affecting setting of January Writ ... its becalmed harmonies and circling
melodic lines ..."

International Record Review (Graham Simpson), April 2004

"January Writ has a beguiling harmonic delicacy that completely draws the listener in,
especially in Polyphony's gripping rendition."

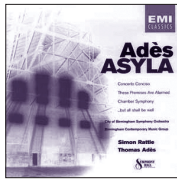
MusicWeb (Tony Haywood), 27 February 2004

Cardiac Arrest

"This punchy, two-minute dance scherzo is great fun ..."

MusicWeb (Tony Haywood), 27 February 2004

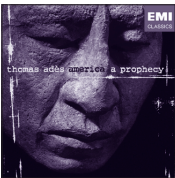
DISCOGRAPHY



ASYLA

Asyla/Concerto Conciso/These Premises are Alarmed/Chamber Symphony/...but all shall be well

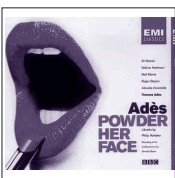
Thomas Adès piano/ City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra/Birmingham Contemporary Music Group/Sir Simon Rattle/Thomas Adès conductor
EMI Classics 7243 5 56818 2 9



AMERICA

America - A Prophecy/The Fayrfax Carol/Fool's Rhymes/January Writ/Oh Thou, who didst with pitfall and with gin/The Lover in Winter/Life Story/Cardiac Arrest/Les baricades mystérieuses/Brahms Susan Bickley/Tom Poster/Hugh Webb/Richard Benjafield/Christopher Bowers-Broadbent/Robin Blaze/Huw Watkins/Claron McFadden/Christopher Maltman/Polyphony/City of Birmingham Symphony Chorus/Composers Ensemble/CBSO/Thomas Adès

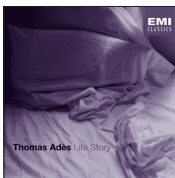
EMI Classics: 7243 5 57610 2 6



POWDER HER FACE

Jill Gomez/Valdine Anderson/Niall Morris/ Roger Bryson/Almeida Ensemble/Thomas Adès

EMI Classics 7243 556649 2 1



LIFE STORY

Catch/Darknesse Visible/Still Sorrowing/Under Hamelin Hill/Five Eliot Landscapes/Traced Overhead/Life Story Thomas Adès/Valdine Anderson/Mary Carewe/Lynsey Marsh/Anthony Marwood/Louise Hopkins/David Goode/Stephen Farr

EMI Classics 7243 569699 2 6



LIVING TOYS

Living Toys/Arcadiana/The Origin of the Harp/Sonata da Caccia/Gefriolsae Me London Sinfonietta/Markus Stenz/Endellion Quartet/Michael Niesemann/Andrew Clark/Thomas Adès/King's College Choir, Cambridge/Robert Quinney/Stephen Cleobury

EMI Classics Debut 7243 5 72271 2 4



PIANO QUINTET

Adès: Piano Quintet/ Schubert: Trout Quintet Thomas Adès/Arditti Quartet/Belcea Quartet/Corin Long

EMI Classics 7243 5 57664 2 7



THOMAS ADÈS: PIANO

Adès plays Castilgioni/Grieg/Stanchinsky/ Kurtág/ Janáček/Busoni/Stravinsky/Nancarrow

EMI Classics 7243 5 57051 2 9

Asyla

"This is Adès' core oeuvre to date, because it strikes to the heart of his compositional armoury: a gift for melody and dance-like rhythm, which are the essence of communication in Western music; an ability to say a large amount in a short space, without making the result indigestible; and a talent for inventing delicate, unconventional sounds...It challenges the intellect, but most important of all it ravishes the senses. Professional musicians are clearly stimulated by the challenges Adès sets them...Adès says more in 61 minutes than most composers manage in a lifetime."

Financial Times (Andrew Clark), 21 June 1999

"Asyla is the freshest of new music, full of inventive sounds and revealing an instantly identifiable personality...The music – Asyla as well as the shorter chamber and orchestral pieces the CD holds – is simply sensational...He does everything irresistibly well. Get this CD, hear the future, and rejoice."

Los Angeles Times (Mark Swed), 12 December 1999

America

"In Adès' hands music is pushed, shaken and agitated, charged, inventive orchestrations redeploy traditional instrumentation to elicit vividly fresh textures...The music is ripe, heavy with allusion but exuberant and restlessly kinetic."

Frieze magazine (Dan Fox), July 2004

"Although it's now impossible not to hear this piece in the context of 9/11, one still marvels at Adès' unceasing musical invention...Each piece on this CD is uniquely unexpected. The inclusion of works like these implies that any stray Adès musical fancy automatically merits being recorded, which, as it happens, is exactly the case."

Opera News (Joshua Rosenblum), July 2004

Life Story

"This is the most exciting collection of music by a young composer that I have heard for a very, very long while. Thomas Adès not only has the gift of seizing your attention with strange but ravishingly beautiful sonorities and then holding it with entrancingly mysterious inventions that allure the ear, he has the much rarer quality of inspiring utter confidence. Whatever he is doing, within a very few bars you trust him implicitly... Adès is a composer whose gifts are so remarkable that it would be hard to exaggerate them."

Gramophone (Michael Oliver), June 1997

"... a bold, original voice – a keen melodist, armed with an arresting gift for instrumentation... Adès is simply unclassifiable; his eclecticism suggests an exploration of possible resources, rather than stylistic dithering... Even without the sensational performances, this would be among the most important new music releases of the year."

San Francisco Examiner (Allan Ulrich), 7 November 1997

Powder Her Face

Adès is the most gifted composer of his generation and he imagines sounds that are dramatically and melodically memorable... the finest British opera since Britten's death. Buy it.

The Sunday Times: Top 10 Recordings for Christmas (Hugh Canning), December 1998

"... burlesque, laughter, outrage and tenderness are all vividly illuminated here by a vibrant instrumental ensemble and a versatile cast in a work rich in talent and dramatic flair."

The Daily Telegraph: Classical CD of the Week, 8 August 1998

Living Toys

"... a vivid demonstration of his formidable gifts... Though there are identifiable models, they are all integrated into a coherent language... everything is oblique, yet magically allusive, full of rapt and rapturous string effects... the sense of an endless fertile imagination constantly redefining its own music territory is never in doubt."

The Guardian: Classical CD of the Week (Andrew Clements), 24 April 1998

Piano Quintet

"Part of the impact of the 'Trout' Quintet here comes from its being paired with Mr. Adès's work. You can't help hearing resonances of Classicism in the new work and strokes of daring in the Schubert... If you get a sense of different things happening simultaneously in different time signatures and different keys [Piano Quintet], this is sometimes exactly the case. The development section build with typically Adèsian wildness until the mood suddenly shifts, and the music turns delicate, with soothing choralelike themes in the piano and softly questioning strings. When restated in the frenetic recapitulation, the main themes are almost unrecognizably transformed. The performance is mesmerizing... Mr. Adès and the Belcea players give a fleet, rippling and fresh account of the Schubert."

The New York Times (Anthony Tomassini), 12 May 2005

Thomas Adès: Piano

"Adès' Grieg is a revelation... As a composer himself, Adès is particularly sensitive to the unique soundworld and idiosyncrasy of each group of pieces, and the resulting kaleidoscope of touch and tone is beautifully recorded."

The Times (Hilary Finch), 26 September 2000

"Adès' genuine respect and admiration for the music on this disc shines through again and again, making the performances throughout not just fine, but special too."

Gramophone (Michael Stewart), Sept/Oct 2000

Thomas Adès: pianist - conductor - festival director

"Adès, possibly the finest interpreter of Janáček's piano music living today ... At the heart of this entirely compelling programme, Adès reigned supreme in thrilling performances of two groups of Janáček's piano solos. Two extracts from the tender, voice-inflected *On the Overgrown Path* framed stark and stomping Moravian folk songs and dances. And then *In the Mist*, its complex mysteries and passions explored with such panache and profundity that it felt as though we were eavesdropping on the composer's soul."

The Times (Hilary Finch), 16 December 2004

"The concert was framed by two larger song-cycles: Britten's *Sechs Hölderlin Fragmente*, and Schumann's *Dichterliebe*. Both brought performances from Bostridge and Adès of concentration and insight, and both conjured images of the necessity and hopelessness of love...Adès' slow, languorous speeds and incisive articulation inspired Bostridge to his most impassioned singing, creating a devastatingly complete portrait of a poet's doomed love, from the heights of erotic infatuation to the desolation of the final song."

The Guardian (Tom Service), 23 June 2004

"In Thomas Adès, the festival has an artistic director who is not only a formidable composer but also an outstanding pianist and conductor and a font of excellent programming ideas ... Mr Adès, 31 this year, is bringing in a new generation of performers and introducing his open-minded audience to a range of keen new experiences. Several of these came at the superbly prepared and highly stimulated concert he gave as conductor with the CBSO...What gave the evening wholeness was not so much the balance of contrasts as the fine quality and distinctiveness of each performance. Gerald Barry's work, bristling with deliberately rough sounds and implacably pulsed, was honoured with fine care.... The Feldman, too, flowered with the attention given it: the regular stitches of its musical fabric were soft and deft, and the sense of a reverberant orchestra was beautifully evoked."

The New York Times (Paul Griffiths), 29 June 2002

"Adès projects his own piano writing with almost casual brilliance, and in the standard repertory, too, he is an inspirational force, always urging his colleagues on."

The Guardian (Andrew Clements), 13 June 2000

"A highlight was the premiere of Nancarrow's *Movements for Orchestra*, composed in the early 1990s but considered unperformable until Adès cracked the code of its complex canons. He and the BCMG were dazzling in this music of dislocation."

The Times (John Allison), 28 June 1999

"For all three works in a programme of contemporary music to be outstanding is luxury indeed, but to expect anything less would be to reckon without the artistic judgement of Thomas Adès at the Aldeburgh Festival...Best of all was Poul Ruders' extraordinary *Piano Sonata no 2* - which Adès delivered with mesmerising aplomb. Performances like this are irrefutable proof that the Aldeburgh Festival is in the best possible hands."

The Times (Barry Millington), 20 June 2001

"Adès plays with rare concentration and passion, transforming whatever he plays through the prism of a composer's imagination...He pours heart, soul and brain through his fingers, head thrown back in trancelike rapture, body at full length from the piano, squeezing the sound out as pure essence."

The Observer (Fiona Maddocks), 12 July 1998

"The Future of Classical Music"

Sir Simon Rattle on Thomas Adès

" Even as the UK is brimming with wonderful young composers, I think few would dispute that Tom Adès may be the most extravagantly gifted of them all ... I have been personally thrilled that the Berliner Philharmoniker have taken as passionately to his music as the CBSO and BCMG; many of them crowding round after the Asyla performances demanding to know why we were not immediately touring it! A new work for 2006-7 was one of our first commissions together and he already feels like a member of the family. He is easier to describe than his music, despite the fact that he is a walking paradox - an immensely friendly, sociable hermit who will just disappear given the slightest chance. The music is harder to pin down, as it gleefully plunders a weird, wonderful and eccentric selection of the past and transmutes it into an unmistakably new voice. It is, almost without exception, written at the far-reaches of instrumental virtuosity - but as a performer, one realises very fast that he has transmitted what he hears in the simplest possible notation, even if he has had to invent new time signatures to cope with the rhythms in his head. It is a sign of the very best music when every hour of rehearsal, every performance brings a feeling of increased depth. However head-scratchingly, stomach-churningly difficult the music is, the truth is that the better you play it, the closer you come to his idiosyncratic vision, the more wonderful it sounds. His sense of depth and darkness lurking behind dancing lightness is, I am sure, going to become more and more a feature of each new work - and all of us eagerly await the next instalments."

Gramophone, March 2003

CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF WORKS

1989

The Lover in Winter

1990

Five Eliot Landscapes Op 1

Chamber Symphony Op 2

O thou who didst with pitfall and with gin Op 3a

Gefriolsae Me Op 3b

1991

Catch Op 4

1992

Fool's Rhymes Op 5

Under Hamelin Hill Op 6

Still Sorrowing Op 7

Darknesse Visible

1993

Life Story Op 8

Living Toys Op 9

... but all shall be well Op 10

Sonata da Caccia Op 11

1994

Arcadiana Op 12

The Origin of the Harp Op 13

1995

Cardiac Arrest

Powder Her Face Op 14

Traced Overhead Op 15

1996

These Premises are Alarmed Op 16

1997

The Fayrfax Carol

Asyla Op 17

Concerto Conciso Op 18

1999

America - A Prophecy Op 19

January Writ

2000

Piano Quintet Op 20

2001

Brahms Op 21

2004

The Tempest Op 22

2005

Court Studies

Violin Concerto

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Abbreviations

WOODWIND picc piccolo; fl flute; afl alto flute;
bfl bass flute; ob oboe; bob bass oboe; ca cor anglais;
acl alto clarinet; cbcl contra bass clarinet;
bsn bassoon; cbsn contra bassoon; ssax soprano
saxophone; asax alto saxophone; tsax tenor
saxophone; bsax baritone saxophone

BRASS hn horn; fl.hn flugelhorn; ptpt piccolo
trumpet (Bb); tpt trumpet; trbn trombone;
btrbn bass trombone; scrt soprano cornet; crt
cornet; rcrt repiano cornet; btuba bass tuba; euph
euphonium; bar baritone

PERCUSSION ant.cym antique cymbals;
BD bass drum; c.bell cow bell; cast castanets;
ch.bl chinese block; chin.cym chinese cymbal;
ch.dr chinese drum; chtpl.bl chinese temple block;
chi.ba chime bars; crot crotales; cym pair of cymbals;
glsp glockenspiel; mcas maracas; mar marimba;
met.bl metal block; mil.glsp military glockenspiel;
riv.cym rivet cymbal; SD side drum; siz.cym sizzle
cymbal; susp.cym suspended cymbal; t.bells tubular
bells; t.mil tambour militaire; tab tabor; tam-t tam-
tam; tamb tambourine; TD tenor drum; tgl triangle;
timb timbale; tpl.bl temple block; vib vibraphone;
wdbl wood block; xyl xylophone; xylrim xylorimba

STRINGS

vln violin; vla viola; vlc cello; db double bass

KEYBOARDS

pno piano; cel celesta; synth synthesizer

OTHERS gtr guitar; bgtr bass guitar; hp harp

All other instrument names are given in full

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