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THE MORGAN LIBRARY & MUSEUM RECEIVES ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPT OF THE PHILIP GLASS OPERATIC MASTERPIECE *EINSTEIN ON THE BEACH*

New York, NY, March 29, 2018 — In 1976 composer Philip Glass and director Robert Wilson redefined opera with the debut in Avignon, France, of *Einstein on the Beach*. The nearly five-hour, non-narrative work broke a host of operatic conventions and would become the most celebrated of the many collaborations between these two giants of the musical and theatrical stage.

Now, Mr. Glass's autograph score for the landmark work is coming to the Morgan Library & Museum as a bequest from the estate of the late New York collector and philanthropist Paul F. Walter. A longtime supporter of the Morgan who died in January 2017, Mr. Walter also bequeathed the museum scene designs and other items related to the work.

"Many have said that the true starting point of contemporary opera was 1976 with the production of *Einstein on the Beach* in Avignon," said Colin B. Bailey, director of the Morgan Library & Museum. "The work was groundbreaking on so many levels, from staging to instrumentation to the choral arrangements. The unrivaled genius of Mr. Glass is evident throughout, and we are deeply grateful to Paul Walter and his estate for generously leaving this work to the Morgan. It is an extraordinary addition to our distinguished collection of music manuscripts."



Philip Glass (b. 1937), Autograph manuscript, *Einstein on the Beach*, The Morgan Library & Museum, Bequest of Paul F. Walter. Photography by Anthony Troncale. © Dunvagen Music Publishers.

In 2010 Mr. Walter placed the *Einstein on the Beach* manuscript on loan at the Morgan for the benefit of scholarly research. Two years later, in 2012, the museum mounted an exhibition devoted to the work and its stage adaptations.



Production still from the 2012/13 revival of Robert Wilson/Philip Glass collaboration *Einstein on the Beach*. Performers L-R: Helga Davis, Kate Moran. Photography: Lucie Jansch.

Mr. Glass eschewed tradition and composed *Einstein on the Beach* for the synthesizers and woodwinds of the Philip Glass Ensemble in addition to voices and solo violin, instead of the typical orchestral arrangement. Abstract dance sequences, choreographed by Lucinda Childs and Andrew de Groat, were juxtaposed against a sequence of large, recurring images projected on a screen at the back of the stage. The opera's four acts

were framed and connected with a series of short scenes or "knee plays." Rather than the standard intermission, the audience was free to enter and exit throughout the almost five-hour performance.

The sung portions of the opera use number sequences and solfège syllables (*do, re, mi, fa, sol, la, ti*); the spoken sections feature texts by Christopher Knowles, Ms. Childs, and actor Samuel M. Johnson. Contemporary events and notable people of the 1970s are referenced in various scenes—from the famous trial of heiress-turned-revolutionary Patty Hearst to the Beatles and pop singer David Cassidy.



Philip Glass and Robert Wilson during rehearsals of *Einstein on the Beach* in Avignon, France, 1976, © Philippe Gras.

Einstein on the Beach was the first of Mr. Glass's portrait trilogy. It was followed by *Satyagraha* (1980), in which the composer turned his attention to Gandhi, and *Akhnaten* (1983), based on the life of the Egyptian pharaoh.

Paul Walter was involved with the Morgan since the late 1970s, when he generously donated a collection of Indian miniature paintings, an area otherwise not represented in the institution's collections. He was named a Life Fellow in 1979 and later a Benefactor and Fellow in Perpetuity. He was also a founding member of the Morgan's Modern and Contemporary Collectors Committee which formed in 2006.

The Morgan Library & Museum

A complex of buildings in the heart of New York City, the Morgan Library & Museum began as the private library of financier Pierpont Morgan, one of the preeminent collectors and cultural benefactors in the United States. Today it is a museum, independent research library, music venue, architectural landmark, and historic site. A century after its founding, the Morgan maintains a unique position in the cultural life of New York City and is considered one of its greatest treasures. With the 2006 reopening of its newly renovated campus, designed by renowned architect Renzo Piano, and the 2010 refurbishment of the original library, the Morgan reaffirmed its role as an important repository for the history, art, and literature of Western civilization from 4000 B.C. to the twenty-first century.

The Morgan Library & Museum

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The programs of the Morgan Library & Museum are made possible with public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council, and by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature.

