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DAVID LANG

## The Little Match Girl Passion

Theatre of Voices, Paul Hillier

1h05 1 SACD HMU807496 August 2009

Co-commissioned by Carnegie Hall especially for **Paul Hillier** and **Theatre of Voices**, David Lang's *The Little Match Girl Passion* was awarded the 2008 Pulitzer Prize in Music. Setting Hans Christian Andersen's fable in the format of Bach's *St Matthew Passion*, Lang elevates the suffering of the little match girl with his poignant, evocative music. Lang's music makes a big impact with small forces. The piece is scored for only four voices and a few percussion instruments, played by the singers. They sing the sad story of a little girl who freezes to death selling matches on the street during a cold winter's night. In notes Lang wrote to accompany the Carnegie Hall premiere last October, he says he was drawn to Andersen's story because of how opposite aspects of the plot played off each other. "The girl's bitter present is locked together with the sweetness of her past memories," Lang says. "Her poverty is always suffused with her hopefulness. There's a kind of naïve equilibrium between suffering and hope." Lang was also intrigued by the religious allegory he saw beneath the surface of the story, and he found inspiration in the music of his favorite composer, J.S. Bach.

**David Lang** is the recipient of the 2008 Pulitzer Prize in Music for *the little match girl passion*, commissioned by Carnegie Hall for the vocal ensemble Theatre of Voices, directed by Paul Hillier. One of America's most performed composers, his recent works include *writing on water* for the London Sinfonietta, with libretto and visuals by English filmmaker Peter Greenaway; *the difficulty of crossing a field* – a fully staged opera for the Kronos Quartet, staged by Carey Perloff and the American Conservatory Theater; *loud love songs*, a concerto for the percussionist Evelyn Glennie; and the oratorio *Shelter*, with co-composers Michael Gordon and Julia Wolfe, at the Next Wave Festival of the Brooklyn Academy of Music, staged by Ridge Theater and featuring the Norwegian vocal ensemble Trio Mediaeval. David Lang is currently on the composition faculties of both the Yale School of Music and the Oberlin Conservatory of Music. He is also Co-Founder and Co-Artistic Director of the New York music festival Bang on a Can.



### Artists

- Theatre of Voices
- Ars Nova Copenhagen
- Paul Hillier  
Conductor

### Composers

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DAVID LANG [1957-]

**the little match girl passion** (2007)

la passion de la petite fille aux allumettes

die passion vom kleinen mädchen mit den schwefelhölzern

- come, daughter (3'41)
- it was terribly cold (2'58)
- dearest heart (0'46)
- in an old apron (1'17)
- penance and remorse (1'31)
- lights were shining (1'41)
- patience, patience! (0'33)
- ah! perhaps (1'55)
- have mercy, my god (4'38)
- she lighted another match (1'14)
- from the sixth hour (2'24)
- she again rubbed a match (1'27)
- when it is time for me to go (3'37)
- in the dawn of morning (2'46)
- we sit and cry (4'35)
- **for love is strong** (11'20)
- **I lie** (5'13)
- **evening morning day** (7'45)
- **again (after ecclesiastes)** (5'36)