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# Evelyn Glennie true musical shaman at New Creations Festival

Article

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By **John Terauds**  
Entertainment Reporter

It's safe to say Peter Oundjian's most notable accomplishment as music director of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra has been the annual New Creations Festival.

The maestro launched the first of three concerts that make up the seventh edition of the festival in fiery form on Wednesday night at Roy Thomson Hall.

Every year, the focus is on the work of one composer, and Oundjian and his colleagues have a knack for programming music and guest performers who can fire up the audience's imagination.

This year's New Creations Festival puts the spotlight on American composer John Adams — one of the most successful living composers in the world right now.

On Wednesday night, the new Canadian work on the program was *The Shaman*, a percussion concerto by Ottawa native Vincent Ho, currently composer-in-residence with the Winnipeg Symphony.

The percussion soloist is the shaman and it's hard to imagine anyone being able to conjure more musical magic on stage than Dame Evelyn Glennie. She moves with an arresting combination of force and grace and plays with a precision that puts many a hearing person

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to shame (Glennie is deaf and plays barefoot to better feel the musical pulse).

Ho's concerto covers three interconnected movements, or episodes. The soloist gets a lot of freedom and, best of all, the orchestra accompanies with an uncommonly colourful score.

Oundjian and his band did great work with Adams's short-burst opener *Short Ride in a Fast Machine* and the 45-minute *Harmonielehre*. Adams wrote both pieces in the mid-1980s, around the same time as the opera *Nixon in China*, and they are fascinating studies in music-as-ever-shifting-kaleidoscope.

*The New Creations Festival continues Saturday at Roy Thomson Hall with the Canadian premiere of Adams' City Noir.*

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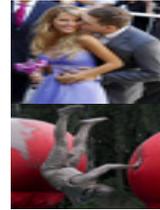
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