



- Born and raised in New England, Adams learned the clarinet from his father and played in marching bands and community orchestras during his formative years.
- He began composing at age ten and heard his first orchestral pieces performed while still a teenager.
- After earning two degrees from Harvard, he moved to Northern California in 1971 and has since lived in the San Francisco Bay area.
- Adams taught at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music for ten years before becoming composer-in-residence of the San Francisco Symphony (1982-85), and creator of the orchestra's highly successful and controversial "New and Unusual Music" series.
- Through his conducting and commissioning of new works, Adams has become a significant mentor of the younger generation of American composers.
- Adams is the 2019 recipient of the Erasmus Prize "for notable contributions to European culture, society and social science," one of only three composers and, of those, the only American to be so honored in the prize's 61-year history.



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