

Adams variations (1993)

Piece for clarinet, violin, cello and piano

Premiered on November 1993 by the ensemble Phoenix, during the « Imaginaires » of J.M. Damian on France-Musique.

This piece is the first version of what later became the first movement of my *Sextet*. I composed it for a programme on French radio about the American composer John Adams. The French were becoming aware of Adam's music at the time, and a number of composers (Thierry Escaich, Jean-Louis Florentz, Pascal Zavarro, Nicolas Bacri...) wanted to pay homage to Adams by writing a piece on the letters of his last name, where ADAMS results in A-D-A-F-E. All the pieces were based on these five notes.

My notes is a short series of six variations on a motif that alludes to minimalist music. It contains rhythmic canons like those of Steve Reich, the arpeggios typical of Philip Glass, and harmonic formulae reminiscent of those of Michael Nyman. The piece is not only a homage to John Adams, therefore, but to all of minimalist music.

Guillaume Connesson