

Julia Wolfe

Biography and Works



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Drawing inspiration from folk, classical, and rock genres, Julia Wolfe's music brings a modern sensibility to each while simultaneously tearing down the walls between them. Her music is distinguished by an intense physicality and a relentless power that pushes performers to extremes and demands attention from the audience. In the words of the *Wall Street Journal*, Wolfe has "long inhabited a terrain of [her] own, a place where classical forms are recharged by the repetitive patterns of minimalism and the driving energy of rock."

Wolfe has written a major body of work for strings, from quartets to full orchestra. Her quartets, as described by the *New Yorker* magazine "combine the violent forward drive of rock music with an aura of minimalist serenity [using] the four instruments as a big guitar, whipping psychedelic states of mind into frenzied and ecstatic climaxes." Wolfe's *Cruel Sister* for string orchestra, inspired by a traditional English ballad of a love rivalry between sisters, was commissioned by the Munich Chamber Orchestra and received its US premiere at the Spoleto Festival, and was recently released (along with her other string orchestra piece, *Fuel*) on Cantaloupe Records. Written shortly after September 11, 2001, her string quartet concerto *My Beautiful Scream*, written for Kronos Quartet and the Orchestre National de France (premiered in the US at the Cabrillo Festival under the direction of Marin Alsop), was inspired by the idea of a slow motion scream. *The Vermeer Room*, *Girlfriend*, and *Window of Vulnerability* exemplify Wolfe's ability to create vivid sonic images. *Girlfriend*, for mixed chamber ensemble and recorded sound, uses a haunting audio landscape that consists of skidding cars and breaking glass. *The Vermeer Room*, inspired by the Vermeer painting "A Girl Asleep" -- which when x-rayed reveals a hidden figure -- received its orchestral premiere with the San Francisco Symphony. *Window of Vulnerability*, written for the American Composers Orchestra and conducted by Dennis Russell Davies, Wolfe creates a massive sonic universe of dense textures and fragile windows.

The influence of pop culture can be heard in many of Wolfe's works, including *Lick* and *Believing* for the Bang on a Can All-Stars. *Lick*, based on fragments of funk, has become a manifesto for the new generation of pop-influenced composers. The raucous *My Lips From Speaking* for six pianos was inspired by the opening riff of the Aretha Franklin tune "Think." Wolfe's *Dark Full Ride* is an obsessive and relentless exploration of the drum set, beginning with an extended hi-hat spotlight. In *LAD*, Wolfe creates a kaleidoscopic landscape for nine bagpipes.

Wolfe has also extended her talents to theatre by composing for Anna Deveare Smith's "House Arrest," and won an Obie award for her score to Ridge Theater's "Jennie Richie." She has compiled a series of collaborative multimedia works with composers Michael Gordon and David Lang, including *Lost Objects* (Concerto Koln, directed by Francois Girard), *Shelter* (Musikfabrik and Ridge Theater), and *The Carbon Copy Building* (with comic-book artist Ben Katchor). Wolfe recently created the city-wide spectacle "Traveling Music" with architects Diller Scofidio+Renfro in Bordeaux, France, filling the streets of the old city with 100 musicians walking and riding in pedi-cabs. Her work with film includes *Fuel* for the Hamburg-based Ensemble Resonanz and filmmaker Bill Morrison, and *Impatience* for the Asko-Schoenberg Ensemble and 1920s film experimentalist Charles De Keukeleire.

Wolfe's *Cruel Sister* for string orchestra (commissioned by the Munich Chamber Orchestra) was recently released with Ensemble Resonanz (along with her other string orchestra work, *Fuel*) on Cantaloupe Music. Other CDs on Cantaloupe include *Dark Full Ride* (music for multiples) and "Julia Wolfe -- The String Quartets." Upcoming projects include a percussion concerto for Colin Currie and the BBC orchestra, a new work for the Amsterdam-based cello8ctet, and an evening length work for the Mendelssohn Club Choir of Philadelphia with the Bang on a Can All-Stars.

Wolfe has collaborated with theater artist Anna Deveare Smith, architects Diller Scofidio+Renfro, filmmaker Bill Morrison, Ridge Theater, director Francois Girard, Jim Findlay, and choreographer Susan Marshall among others. Her music has been heard at BAM, the Sydney Olympic Arts Festival, Settembre Musica (Italy), Theatre de la Ville (Paris), Lincoln Center and Carnegie Hall, and has been recorded on Cantaloupe, Teldec, Point/Universal, Sony Classical, and Argo/Decca. In 2009 Wolfe joined the NYU Steinhardt School composition faculty. She is co-founder of New York's music collective Bang on a Can.

Her music is published by Red Poppy Music (ASCAP) and is distributed worldwide by G. Schirmer, Inc.

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Orchestra

Amber Waves of Grain (1988) 8'
2(pic).222/432+btbn.1/4perc/hp/str
Performance materials on rental

Cruel Sister (2004) 35'
str (min 65431)
Performance materials on rental

Fuel (2007) 20'
str
Performance materials on rental

Tell me everything (1994) 8'
111.asx.1/1110/2perc/hp.pf/str
Alt: 111.asx.1/1110/2perc/hp.pf/amp 2vn, amp va, amp vc, amp db
Performance materials on rental

The Vermeer Room (1989) 15'
1(af).11(bcl).1/11.btbn.0/2perc/pf/str
Alt: fl(af), ob, cl(bcl), bn, hn, tpt, btbn, 2perc, pf, hp, 2vn, va, vc, db
Performance materials on rental

Window of Vulnerability (1991) 9'
3(2pic).3.3(bcl).2+cbn/4.3.3(btbn).1/timp.4perc/hp.syn.pf/str
Performance materials on rental

Soloist(s) and Orchestra

My Beautiful Scream (2003) 25'
Solo: amplified string quartet
3(pic).2+ca.2+bcl.2+cbn/4.3.2+btbn.1/4perc/amp pf.hp.ebgr/str
Performance materials on rental

riSE and fLY (2012)
Solo: Percussion orchestra

Large Ensemble (7 or more players)

Arsenal of Democracy (1993) 9'
1(pic).00.ssx+asx+barsx.0/132+btbn.0/bgtr/pf
Performance materials on rental

Combat de boxe (2011)
1(pic)111/1111/2perc/hp.pf.egtr/11111

Girlfriend (1988, rev. 1998) 18'
all instruments amplified: fl(af),pic, cl(bcl), full-size MIDI kbd with Electric Organ sound, perc, twelve cheap wine glasses (to be stomped on, 2 per player), vn, vc, audio tape with click track
Performance materials on rental

Impatience (2005) 37'
1(pic).1.1.1/1111/2perc/egtr/hp.pf/str (11111)
Performance materials on rental

LAD (2007) 17'
9 bagpipes
Alt: bagpipe

Steam (1995) 7'
fl, vc, eorg, Harry Partch instruments
Performance materials on rental

Steel Hammer (2009) 1h 30'
Text: (English)
Solo: 3 sopranos
cl, perc, gtr, pf, vc, db

Stronghold (2008) 17'
8db
Alt: db/tp
Performance materials sold by Rental Library

Traveling Music (2009)
100+ musicians of any type
Performance materials on rental

Soloist(s) and Large Ensemble (7 or more players)

Accordion Concerto ("True Love") (2005) 20'
Solo: Accordion
1.1.1(bcl).1/1.1.1.1/perc/hp.pf/str (1.1.1.1.1)
Performance materials on rental

Works for 2-6 Players

Believing (1997) 9'
amplified sextet
Performance materials sold by Rental Library

Dark Full Ride (2002) 18'
four drum sets
Performance materials sold by Rental Library

Work List

Julia Wolfe

Dig Deep 2vn, va, vc <i>Performance materials sold by Rental Library</i>	14'	East Broadway (1996) toy piano, toy boombox <i>Performance materials sold by Rental Library</i>	3'
Early that summer (1993) 2vn, va, vc <i>Performance materials sold by Rental Library</i>	12'	my lips from speaking (1993) arr./ed./orch. (2012) 2 pianos	15'
Four Marys (1991) 2vn, va, vc <i>Performance materials sold by Rental Library</i>	12'	my lips from speaking (1993) 6 pianos <i>Performance materials sold by Rental Library</i>	13'
Lick (1994) all instruments amplified: ssx, perc, pf, egtr, vc, db <i>Performance materials sold by Rental Library</i>	8'	Chorus a cappella / Chorus plus 1 instrument	
Mink Stole (1997) vn, pf <i>Performance materials sold by Rental Library</i>	10'	Guard My Tongue (2009) Text: (English) text derived from Psalm 34 Chorus: SATB a cappella <i>Performance materials sold by Rental Library</i>	8'
on seven-star-shoes (1985) fl(pic), ob, cl(bcl), bn, hn <i>Performance materials sold by Rental Library</i>	6'	Chorus and Orchestra/Ensemble	
Reeling (2102) cl, perc, pf, egtr, vc, db; audio component	5' 45"	Thirst (2008) Text: (English) Old Testament, Isaiah 41:17, 29:18, 41:18 <i>Part VI of 'Water'</i> Chorus: SATB 1111(cbn)/1110/2perc/pf/egtr/str(1.1.1.1.1) <i>Performance materials on rental</i>	27'
Singing in the Dead of Night (2008) fl, cl, vn, vc, perc, pf <i>Performance materials sold by Rental Library</i>	20'	Electroacoustic Works	
Solo Works (excluding keyboard)		Democracy (1999) electronic tape <i>Performance materials on rental</i>	15'
With a Blue Dress On (2010) vn, electronics	20'		
Solo Keyboard(s)			
Compassion (2001) piano <i>Performance materials sold by Rental Library</i>	7'		
Earring (2001) piano <i>Performance materials sold by Rental Library</i>	2'		

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UNAVAILABLE

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For more information on the music of Julia Wolfe, please visit www.musicsalesclassical.com or contact:

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