

H-71231 (stereo)

A Nonesuch Records commission

ERIC SALZMAN THE NUDE PAPER SERMON

Tropes for Actor, Renaissance Consort,
Chorus, and Electronics

Stacy Keach, actor / The Nonesuch Consort / Members of the New York Motet Singers

Joshua Rifkin, conductor



The Nude Paper Sermon is about the end of the Renaissance—the end of an era and the beginning of another.

Therefore it is about old and new means of communication, about verbal and non-verbal sound, about the familiar and the unknown, about human activity and the new technologies. It is not a “neo-classic” work nor is it a collage; rather it is “post-modern-music, post-modern-art, post-style,” a multi-layer sound drama that is itself an example of the kinds of experience which it interprets and expresses: the transformation of values and tradition through the impact of the new technologies.

Technology is no longer merely a set of techniques for imposing a certain order on the external world but itself a vehicle for remarkable changes—changes that affect individual experience as well as the nature of the culture. Recorded music is at the center of musical life and communication today; recordings have opened up the musical past, created multiple presents and, one hopes, a future. Recording technology makes all possible musical and sonic experiences of the external world raw material and even, increasingly, part of a common culture. Multi-track, multi-layer experience becomes the norm: Ravi Shankar, John Cage, the Beatles, Gregorian chant, electronic music, Renaissance madrigals and motets, Bob Dylan, German *Lieder*, soul, J. S. Bach, jazz, Ives, Balinese gamelan, Boulez, African drumming, Mahler, *gagaku*, Frank Zappa, Tchaikovsky, Varèse . . . all become part of the common shared experience.

Recording technology also transforms that which it communicates: it makes all music part of the present and in so doing changes it. There is nothing inherently good or bad about this; technology can liberate and it can oppress. But there is no running away any more; we must master what can oppress us, learn how to use it to create and liberate.

The Nude Paper Sermon is the first “total” work to be shaped on, by, and through the medium of modern recording; the record is not a reproduction of anything at all but is the work itself. Like a print or film, it has been created to be duplicated in multiple copies. Commissioned by Nonesuch Records for the Nonesuch Consort, *The Nude Paper Sermon* was composed in “tracks” and was recorded and mixed as such through a unique collaboration among composer, conductor, and producer/engineer. (A related but different live/theater version also exists and was first performed in New York on March 20, 1969.) The elements have all been recorded or synthesized on separate tracks, individually edited; combined with “live” overlays, these are mounted to create an 8-track master; finally, all of these elements—live/recorded and electronic, all juxtaposed, intertwined, and transformed—have been mixed down to a final 2-track master. The recording acoustics themselves are not “reproductive” but are actual parameters of the work. (Incidentally, all of the unusual sounds and complex passages produced by the vocalists and instrumentalists are actually performed and not the result of electronic manipulation.)





The words are taken from *Three Madrigals* by John Ashbery (texts for soloists and chorus) and *The Nude Paper Sermon* by Steven Wade (texts for actor). The latter, produced especially for this work, is written to suggest the contemporary verbal barrage, that endless language stream of all those who use words to manipulate others: preacher, politician, TV personality, professor, news-caster, even poet. The actor's part is a kind of scoring imposed by composer and performer on fragments of text that are used emotively and as a kind of symbology. At times words dominate, at times they are submerged, at times a precarious balance, interaction, or interweaving is maintained.

By and large, printed texts would be beside the point; *spoken* language—heard and overheard, comprehensible and incomprehensible, clear, elusive, simple, complex, logical, mystifying—is the subject matter here. Perhaps one printed text is in order, however: that part of one of Ashbery's madrigals which has a traditional structure but is made out of a series of word images and verbal snapshots. It occurs near the very beginning of the work and is set as a kind of Renaissance ruin—real fake Renaissance music ("why don't composers write like that any more?") overlaid with electronic graffiti:

Not even time shall efface
The bent disk
And the wicked shores snore
Far from the divining knell!

On his livid perch
Let not the master be cast
Back on the petitioner
To wise limits of the secret

That hurt the whole city.
The ever prospering shepherds
Are that, who have tasted lament
The shell splashed bitter darkness on the shore

Near the intruder's arch.
The last party to be seized
At twilight and time was cold
To the lovers. And seized their praise

Wild that to the room
With brother and sister came.
That passions are a fence
Draw the vines out of the earth

And listen to new
Memory falls on your olive hands,
The undying luck
Of the dying million ageless

Pushed to hands for approval.
Along the level bay
A dim blaze of diamond
Walking to you: what you had

ERIC SALZMAN

Eric Salzman's works include *Verses and Cantos*, *The Peloponnesion War* (dance/theater collage with Daniel Nagrin), *Feedback* (with visuals by Stan Vanderbeek), *Foxes and Hedgehogs*, and *In Praise of the Owl and the Cuckoo*; he has also composed the score for *Can Man Survive?*, a mixed-media environmental exhibit at the American Museum of Natural History in New York. In the summer of 1969, he toured South America, giving performances, seminars, and lectures. Educated at Princeton and Columbia and in Europe, he has been a critic with the *New York Times* and *Herold Tribune*, and is currently a critic for *Stereo Review* and music

director of WBAI-FM in New York. He is the author of a book on 20th-century music and numerous articles that have appeared in this country and abroad.

Stacy Keach played the title role in *MocBird!*, Falstaff and Peer Gynt with the New York Shakespeare Festival, Coriolanus with the Yale Repertory Theater, Edmund in *King Lear* at the Lincoln Center Repertory Theater, and the drifter in the film *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*. He has studied at the University of California at Berkeley and the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art; he has also been assistant professor of acting at the Yale Repertory Theater. In the 1969-70 season, he stars in

the film *End of The Road* and, on Broadway, in Arthur Kopit's *Indians*.

Joshua Rifkin studied at the Juilliard School of Music, New York and Princeton Universities, and in Germany. His music has been performed in America and Europe; he has also written arrangements for singers Judy Collins and Tom Paxton. As musical supervisor of Nonesuch Records, he founded the Nonesuch Consort in 1968; although the major activity of the group is the exploration of early music, contemporary works also play a significant role in their repertoire.



ERIC SALZMAN (b. 1933): THE NUDE PAPER SERMON (1968-69)

Tropes for Actor, Renaissance Consort, Chorus, and Electronics

Texts from John Ashbery, *Three Madrigals*; Steven Wade, *The Nude Paper Sermon*

Side One (21:31)

A babble; a madrigal with electronic graffiti—the sermon begins; soprano solos; with chorus (the "10 qualities": bodily, sexual, ritual, sub-verbal, etc.)—an instrumental canzona—another madrigal—solos for wind instruments (racket; bass & tenor dulcian; bass, tenor & alto recorder; gemshorn; soprano, alto & bass krummhorn; kortholt; shawm; rauschpfeife), with chorus; climax, coda

Side Two (23:22)

Monologues, fragments, "ruins"—a choral madrigal—solos for counter-tenor; duet for soprano and counter-tenor; with chorus, plus gamba & lute—lute solos with accompaniments; OM; shout, babble, bells; survival song; wind, birds, stars

STACY KEACH, actor

THE NONESUCH CONSORT

Diana Tramontini, soprano—William Zukof, counter-tenor

Alan Titus, baritone—Kenneth Wollitz, winds—

Lucy Cross, lute—Richard Taruskin, viola da gamba—with Steven Pepper, portative organ

Members of THE NEW YORK MOTET SINGERS, Joseph Hansen, director

JOSHUA RIFKIN, conductor

Electronic sounds realized at the Columbia-Princeton Electronic Music Center, New York

Special Assistance: Steven Pepper / Produced and Recorded by Peter K. Siegel

Editing & Mixing: Joshua Rifkin, Eric Salzman, Peter K. Siegel A Dolby-system recording

Recorded at Elektra Sound Recorders, New York; A & R Recording, New York

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NONESUCH



RECORDS

ERIC SALZMAN

(b. 1933)

STEREO

H-71231-A

STEREO

SIDE ONE (21:31)

THE NUDE PAPER SERMON
Tropes for Actor, Renaissance Consort,
Chorus & Electronics
Part I

Stacy Keach, actor The Nonesuch Consort
Members of the N.Y. Motet Singers, Joseph Hansen dir.

JOSHUA RIFKIN, conductor

Produced & Recorded by Peter K. Siegel

NONESUCH



RECORDS

ERIC SALZMAN

(b. 1933)

STEREO

H-71231-B

STEREO

SIDE TWO (23:22)

THE NUDE PAPER SERMON
Tropes for Actor, Renaissance Consort,
Chorus & Electronics
Part II

Stacy Keach, actor The Nonesuch Consort
Members of the N.Y. Motet Singers, Joseph Hansen dir.

JOSHUA RIFKIN, conductor

Produced & Recorded by Peter K. Siegel