



violin concertos remains to be seen, but it will need to be given serious consideration.

*Nyx* (2010), the Greek goddess of night (sleep, death), is a lush 20-minute tone poem redolent of IRCAM-ian Impressionism. Debussy and Ravel are not too far away and would have loved the expanded tonal resources. The humid atmosphere is contrasted with episodes of power and searing expressivity. It would have been helpful if we were given more information about the events suggested in the work, since it's hard to follow as pure abstraction, though that might be enough for some. The work offers a contrast to the more aggressive athleticism and clearer structural delineation of the concerto, though again I wonder about its lasting potential.

The Finnish Radio musicians acquit themselves with crisp virtuosity and sumptuous sonority where appropriate. Notes by Ms Vallmaki are packed with distracting purple prose. The release is called "Out of Nowhere" after a note in his sketch describing the opening of the concerto.

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**SALZMAN:** *Nude Paper Sermon; Helix; Wiretap; Larynx Music; Queens Collage* Stacy Keach, narr; Daniel Negrin, Elise Ross, voice; Stanley Silverman, g; Quog Music Theater, New York Motets Singers, Nonesuch Consort/ Joshua Rifkin

Labor 7092 [2CD] 1:34

Eric Salzman is probably best known today for his classic music textbook (*20th Century Music: An Introduction*) which I used with great success over the course of my teaching career. He was also known in New York for his musical directorship of WBAI, the listener supported FM station famous for its radical politics and adventurous artistic bent. The station, which never had any problem switching gleefully between Steppenwolf, "world music", the 60s avant-garde, and the Ring Cycle, was highly influential on my own musical development. I can thank Mr Salzman for much of that, since he directed the station's Free Music Store, an intimate concert series held in the lower East side church the station was then housed in. I attended as many of them as I could and listened to almost all the broadcasts.

Salzman was actually primarily a composer, and *The Nude Paper Sermon* (1968-1969) is probably his best known project. It was originally an NPR broadcast, then released on LP by Nonesuch, and was something of an avant-garde hit back then. Disc 1 is a reissue of that LP.

The piece is considered (by the composer) "the first 'total' work to be shaped on, by, and through the medium of modern recordings;

the record is not a reproduction of anything at all but is the work itself". 1968 is pretty early for this kind of thing, a collage of seemingly unrelated materials artistically pasted together in the recording studio. A French motet written by Salzman, poetry by John Ashbery, comments on society, death, and the Vietnam War by Steven Wade read by Stacy Keach, crowd sounds, extraneous electronic interruptions composed on the Buchler synthesizer at Columbia, and disjunct vocal gestures and squeaky instrumental improv are loosely arranged as a druggy (that is, "psychedelic") 60s dreamscape. This technique became the norm in the pop music world with George Martin's *Sgt. Pepper*, and in fact may have originated there. The "innovation" Salzman credits himself with is the fact that this is said to be the first time the technique was used for "serious" music. Nevertheless, the result is clearly influenced by the likes of Cage and Stockhausen, and they do hover unmistakably in the background (Stockhausen is actually buried on the cover of *Sgt. Pepper*, as you might recall.)

Disc 2 of the release contains four pieces by Salzman related in some way to *Nude Paper Sermon*. *Helix* (1972) is an improvisational piece for voices of the QUOG Music Theater singing mystically open triads, with clarinet, guitar, and bells as color commentary. *Wiretap* consists of multitracked vocal lines manipulated in the recording studio. Actor-Dancer Daniel Negrin is heard panting and groaning "as if we were tapping in to a mini-drama of oppression and struggle". That would pretty much describe it.

*Larynx Music*, for voice, guitar, and tape, is a duo for soprano and guitar; Ms Ross does her best Cathy Berberian imitation as she commits vocal pointillism and concludes with atonal song on a text by John Ashbery not printed in the booklet (and not understandable). Finally, *Queens Collage* (1968), beside having a great title, is a found-sound piece composed with what was heard outside a Queens College campus window (Salzman taught there very briefly), along with amusingly interpolated bits of recorded "real" music. This is a work of standard *musique concrete* localized for the occasion.

Anyone with interest in the period will find this release valuable, especially if they were in New York at the time. Notes by the composer text of Ashbery's poem used in *Nude Paper Sermon*, an appreciation by William Gibson and lots of priceless photographs.

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