

The Kitchen Center for Video and Music
press release

ROBERT ASHLEY

"Music Word Fire And I Would Do It Again (Coo-Coo): The Lessons"

June 28, 1981 11:00pm
WNET-TV Channel 13 "Video Film Review"
Stereo Simulcast on WNYC 93.9FM

On June 28, 1981 at 11:00pm, WNET-TV will broadcast "Music Word Fire And I Would Do It Again (Coo-Coo): The Lessons", a 30-minute television program featuring video by John Sanborn, music production by Peter Gordon, the extraordinary keyboard inventions of "Blue" Gene Tyranny and the singing of Jill Kroesen and David Van Tieghem. This program is part of Robert Ashley's "PERFECT LIVES (PRIVATE PARTS)", an opera for television, commissioned and produced by The Kitchen. The program will be stereo simulcast on WNYC 93.9FM and is the premiere broadcast of WNET's Video Film Review for the summer 1981 season.

In Robert Ashley's "PERFECT LIVES (PRIVATE PARTS)", Buddy (The World's Greatest Piano Player) teaches his secrets to a select few through a set of video tapes currently in the hands of Baby, an all-around spiritual seeker and wife of Rodney (The Bartender). These legendary tapes are documents of rare and impossible occasions at the piano ("...and how they do it no one knows."). If you can't play boogie-woogie after this half-hour, there's no hope.

"The Lessons", variations on the theme song from Episode Three of the television opera, introduces the four principal characters in cameo performances. The video and music techniques unique to the seven-episode series are presented in four seven-minute portraits of Isolde (Marie Isolde), Raoul de Noget (No-Zhay), Buddy (The World's Greatest Piano Player) and The Captain of the Football Team (His parents call him Donnie).

"The Lessons" were designed and edited by John Sanborn, video director for the opera in collaboration with Mr. Ashley; Kit Fitzgerald, associate video director; and Carlota Schoolman (producer for The Kitchen). Music production is by Peter Gordon and costumes by Jackie Humbert. This production is part of the WNET-TV Lab's Artist-in-Residence program, Carol Brandenburg, executive producer.

"PERFECT LIVES (PRIVATE PARTS)" is an opera for three solo voices and solo piano synchronized with pre-recorded arrangements for orchestra and chorus. Each episode is built on a continuous narration sung by Ashley describing the events of the story, a post-modern version of the mythology of small-town middle America.

ROBERT ASHLEY is known as a pioneer in the development of music theatre and large-scale collaborative performance forms. His work is distinguished by new uses of language in a musical setting, unique uses of various visual media, and a style of "portrait" performance in various techniques and media. Ashley's latest recording, "The Bar" from "PERFECT LIVES (PRIVATE PARTS)" has recently been released by Lovely Music, Ltd. (VR 4904). "The Lessons" (VR 4908) will be released in July. This summer, Ashley will be in residence at RTBF, Liege, Belgium, completing work on "The Bar", Episode Four of the opera, for European release in the Fall.

THE KITCHEN has produced and exhibited innovative performing and media artists for the last ten years. Ashley's opera is the first of a series of programs specifically designed for broadcast television by major contemporary artists and commissioned and produced by The Kitchen.