

**DANCE THEATER WORKSHOP**  
**THE KITCHEN CENTER**  
**FOR VIDEO, MUSIC, & DANCE**  
**and PERFORMING ARTSERVICES**

**present**

**Robert Ashley's**  
**"PERFECT LIVES**  
**(PRIVATE PARTS)"**

**An Opera in Progress for Television**

**December 26, 27, 28, 29 at 7:30**

**December 30 at 2:30**

**1979**

**American Theatre Laboratory, 219 W.19th St., N.Y.C.**

DANCE THEATER WORKSHOP (DTW/MUSIC)  
THE KITCHEN CENTER FOR VIDEO, MUSIC AND DANCE  
AND

PERFORMING ARTSERVICES INC.

present

ROBERT ASHLEY'S

PERFECT LIVES (PRIVATE PARTS)

An Opera in Progress for Television

Featuring "BLUE" GENE TYRANNY creating the character of "Buddy" at the keyboard  
with

Jill Kroesen

David Van Tieghem

Steve Paxton

Lisa Nelson

Nancy Stark Smith

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"The Park"

"The Supermarket"

"The Bar"

"The Living Room"

"The Church"

There will be no intermission.

Musical collaborator..... "Blue" Gene Tyranny, with  
production by Peter Gordon  
Visual presentation..... Mary Ashley with Harold Borkin  
Television producer for The Kitchen..... Carlota Schoolman  
Executive producer for WGBY-TV..... Ron Nicodemus  
Recording producer..... Peter Gordon  
Sound installation engineer..... Marc Grafe  
Live sound mix..... Peter Gordon  
Video..... Mary Lucier, John Sanborn,  
Carlota Schoolman  
Lighting..... William C. Yehle  
Recording engineer..... Jay Burnett  
Stage manager..... Lloyd Trufelman  
Production assistants..... Greg Miller, Ned Sublette  
(courtesy of CAPS Community Service)  
Location photography..... Mimi Johnson  
Location scout in Illinois..... George H. Johnson  
Management and administration..... Performing Artservices Inc.

"Palace" organ courtesy of Gulbransen, CBS Musical Instruments, a division of CBS, Inc.

Special thanks to John Deere and Company

Music published by Visibility Music Publishers, BMI.

"The Park" and "The Backyard" are recorded on the album, Private Parts, by Lovely Music (LML 1001).

Producer for "DTW/MUSIC" (Dance Theater Workshop)..... David R. White  
Production managers for "DTW/MUSIC"..... William C. Yehle  
Peter A. Kaczorowski

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This production is made possible in part through a grant from Meet the Composer.

PERFECT LIVES (PRIVATE PARTS) is a special event presentation of Dance Theater Workshop, whose DTW/MUSIC new music production program has been made possible with funds from the New York State Council on the Arts and the Martha Baird Rockefeller Fund for Music. DTW also acknowledges, with appreciation, the support of the Howard Bayne Fund, Mobil Foundation, Morgan Guaranty and Trust, the Shubert Foundation, and the Friends of DTW -- without whom this presentation, and others like it, would not be possible.

PERFECT LIVES (PRIVATE PARTS) BY ROBERT ASHLEY

A TELEVISION PILOT, "LIVE AT THE KITCHEN"

"Live at The Kitchen", a series of performances especially produced for television will be inaugurated in the fall of 1980 with the television premiere of Robert Ashley's PERFECT LIVES (PRIVATE PARTS). In collaboration with WGBY-TV (Springfield, Massachusetts), The Kitchen will offer this major performance event to television audiences nationwide. This project institutes a structure which will allow contemporary artists access to broadcast television.

The performance of PERFECT LIVES (PRIVATE PARTS), an opera for voices and instruments in a video environment, will be especially designed as seven, half-hour programs for television and radio simulcast produced in front of an audience at The Kitchen in New York City.

PERFECT LIVES (PRIVATE PARTS) consists of seven extended songs for solo voice, actors and instrumental soloists, accompanied by synchronized recordings of backgrounds for various instruments and voices, and performed in a closed-circuit video environment. The concert version, featuring video details of virtuoso performances on keyboard instruments, involves four musician/actors in an elaborate live-video presentation.

Along with the video details of the on-going performance, the visual world of PERFECT LIVES (PRIVATE PARTS) is the landscape and people of the small-town Midwest, where the story takes place. The live audience will see that landscape on the pre-recorded closed-circuit video. The visual presentation of that landscape and the interior landscape of the live performance details derives in style from the familiar montage style of the "evening news". And the relationship between the two, dramatically different visual worlds is created both in the plot of the music play and in the treatment of the visual materials.

The principal setting and center of gravity of PERFECT LIVES (PRIVATE PARTS) is a piano-bar at The Lounge, the kind one might find in any modern, small-town hotel or club. Here, where the serious women lunch, where lovers meet, where the traveling men look inward, where the young men come of age, in the evening there is music . . . and this is the music of PERFECT LIVES (PRIVATE PARTS). At this particular lounge the music is provided by two principal musicians, a singer, "R", and his accompanist, Buddy. They are backed-up by two others, a percussionist and a female vocalist.

In The Lounge, there are TV sets, huge ones, that in the daytime hours provide the patrons with the entertainment or solace that the musicians provide at night. These huge sets seem never to be turned off. "R" and Buddy leave them on during their "act", soundless, to make it look better or just more colorful.

"R" watches constantly as he sings; Buddy's piano playing is disturbed by nothing. In the video imagery of PERFECT LIVES (PRIVATE PARTS), these are the screens that show us (the television audience) and the patrons of The Lounge, what happens\* outside, the "evening news" in a small, Midwestern town.

## THE CHARACTERS

"R": The singer and story-teller, unnamed, who sings the songs of PERFECT LIVES in a kind of tuned, careful "speech", a seamless merger of poetry and sound.

BUDDY: "R"'s accompanist, who has been called, maybe without exaggeration, "The World's Greatest Piano Player". His style, cool and elaborate, is the dream of everyone who has ever sought out a piano-bar for solace.

ISOLDE: The older of the Sheriff's children ("the kids"), not exactly a spinster, but she's nearing thirty and is still unspoken-for.

THE CAPTAIN OF THE FOOTBALL TEAM: Isolde's younger brother. Since graduation he's worked at The Bank.

THE SHERIFF AND HIS WIFE: They solve the question of the missing money, by deduction, and shed some light on what has happened to the character of their son (The Captain of the Football Team).

GWYN ("Gwyn works at The Bank. Mostly she helps people count their money. She likes it".) AND ED: Who elope.

THE OLD MAN AND WOMAN IN THE SUPERMARKET: Who live at the old folks' home but have a strange "arrangement".

RODNEY: A bartender and an isolationist.

DWAYNE: A strong, silent type. A friend of Ed, Gwyn and "the kids".

THE JUSTICE OF THE PEACE: Who likes to give advice.

THE TELLERS AT THE BANK: Mostly they help people count their money, they like it.

THE PEOPLE IN THE BACKYARD

## THE SEVEN EPISODES, IN ORDER

The "news event" of each of the seven episodes takes place in a different small-town locale or "landscape", and each episode contains the "portrait" of a character or characters.

### THE PARK -- 11:00 AM

Portrait of a traveling man, perhaps the singer, "R", himself, and the landscape of a small-town park.

(Camera: slow pan, right to left)

### THE SUPERMARKET -- 1:00 PM

Portrait of the Old Man and Woman, in the landscape of a large, Midwestern supermarket.

(Camera: long zoom in)

### THE BANK -- 3:00 PM

Portrait of Gwyn and Ed and The Captain of the Football Team and the geometrical landscape of The Bank.

(Camera: extreme close-up)

### THE BAR -- 11:00 PM

Portrait of Buddy and his encounter with Rodney, in the vertical landscape of the bottles and men at the bar.

(Camera: slow zoom out, a "reveal")

### THE LIVING ROOM -- 9:00 PM

Portrait of the Sheriff and his wife. Their faces are the landscape, fitting together in jigsaw-like configurations.

(Camera: two-shot)

### THE CHURCH -- 5:00 PM

The further adventures of Ed and Gwyn, who meant only to elope, but stumble into the landscape of small-town ritual. Contains an important sermon on agriculture and geometry.

(Camera: wide-angle lens)

### THE BACKYARD -- 7:00 PM

Portrait of Isolde, who thinks in numbers. A mysterious epilogue in the twilight of The Backyard.

(Camera: truck shot, clockwise)