



After Silence

Music of John King and Steve Reich

"After silence, that which comes nearest to expressing the inexpressible is music."

Aldous Huxley, *Music at Night* (1931)

The compositions on this program – John King's *AllSteel* and Steve Reich's *Different Trains* -- are autobiographical in nature. Both touch upon some of the major themes of the human experience (War, Beauty, Consolation). Brought together, these two contemporary masterpieces render a thoughtful, touching reflection on the power of music as a highly personal means of "expressing the inexpressible."

John King, who lives and works in New York City's Lower East Side, was commissioned in 2001 to write a string quartet for ETHEL. He commenced his work on *AllSteel* on September 10, 2001, developing the core musical ideas for four movements and the main structure of the work. The events of the next day dramatically altered the course of Mr. King's creative process -- a long shadow was cast over his initial ideas that would then serve to inform and alter the entire piece as he continued to write. In its final form, *AllSteel* is an 8-movement work, the odd-numbered movements (the original 4) run from blues-infused riffs to the spirited, driving power of ETHEL's muscular grooves, while the even-numbered, (post 9/11) movements of the work are all meditations and reflections on the subject of peace --- prayers, and dreams thereof. The 5th movement's violin solo/cadenza, growing out of (fighting through) an obsessive slow pedal-groove embodies the spirit of the work as a whole with its intensely personal expression – the struggle, the pain, the questions unanswered. The piece was completed in March 2002.

As a child, composer Steve Reich (born 1936) spent several wartime years traveling by train between his estranged parents, his mother in Los Angeles and his father in New York. While these trips were exciting adventures for the young Reich, years later he realized that, had he grown up in Europe as a young Jewish man, he might have ended up on very "different trains." In *Different Trains* Reich combines highly compelling rhythmical string writing with carefully chosen "found sounds" (voices of Holocaust survivors, a retired train porter, his own governess, and recorded sounds of European and American trains from the 1930s and 40s) to create a unique and gripping musical journey.



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