



ETHEL: Present Beauty  
"The Hours" by Philip Glass

The concept of Literature as a muse for composers is hardly a new phenomenon. Passages of sacred text have always inspired musical treatment. The art of the song cycle evolved largely from literary and poetic sources, and there are certainly many popular songwriters following this model today. Opera, Ballet, Theater and now Film are all media where music and literature meet and mingle.

Stephen Daldry's 2002 film realization of Michael Cunningham's novel *The Hours* drew a hauntingly beautiful sound score from Philip Glass. There is a powerful affinity between Glass' creative aesthetic and that of the novel's protagonist, author Virginia Woolf. As a writer, she developed the theme of beauty as an experience rooted in the present moment, rather than in relationship to the past or the future. In his music, Glass captures beauty in continuity, without beginning, climax or end. As Michael Cunningham points out in the liner notes to "The Hours" CD, "Glass can find in three repeated notes something of the strange rapture of sameness that Woolf discovered in a woman named Clarissa Dalloway doing errands on a summer morning."

The art of living in and appreciating the "Now" is more and more becoming the subject of universal discussion; from spiritual communities to popular entertainment to scientific publications. ETHEL presents a program celebrating the concepts of presence and continuity, featuring their own new string quartet arrangement of Philip Glass' score from *The Hours*. Also on the program are compositions by Terry Riley, Huang Ruo, David Lang, and Julia Wolfe.



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