

**STEPHEN DICKMAN**  
**Who Says Words**

**New World Records 80573**

Stephen Dickman, born in 1943 in Chicago, has carved out a unique place in contemporary music. As an undergraduate at Bard College, he worked with Jacob Druckman, continuing on to an M.F.A. from Brandeis University under the direction of Arthur Berger and Harold Shapero. Like such other composers of his generation as Philip Glass and Steve Reich, he started his composition studies when the twelve-tone method still dominated American music. And like these others, he turned to what was called minimalism as a means of finding a voice of his own. His *a cappella* opera of 1970, *Real Magic in New York*, which premiered at the Film Makers Cinemateque in Soho to a libretto by Richard Foreman, combined theatrical hijinks with a spare form of music sounding much like Gregorian chant.

During the following four years Dickman left the American musical scene behind by striking out on his own, first on a Fulbright fellowship to Rome, then to Asia, where he studied *sarangi*, a bowed Indian instrument, with Pandit Ram Narayan in Bombay. During these years abroad he wrote *Musical Journeys*, a four-volume diary in which he tried out his own musical ideas, including new sets of scales on which he has drawn ever since for his compositions. Dickman has spoken of the liberating effect exercised upon his style by his experience of non-Western music.

Although others among his contemporaries, such as Glass, have also drawn upon non-Western sources, Dickman has not turned to electronic enhancements as a means of creating new sounds, as many of them have. Indeed, the sonic universe that defines his work is notable for its sparseness, its simplicity of means. As most of the pieces in this selection illustrate, he typically builds a composition out of a voice in dialogue with a single instrument. Using a scale that is often unique to a particular piece, the voice and instrument repeat a limited number of motifs to weave a hypnotic spell over the listener. The longest piece on this disc, *The Music of Eric Zann*, is, in fact, an unaccompanied solo for baritone, built out of two scales.

The spell cast by Dickman's music in no way compromises the importance of the words that he is setting. Indeed, he demands an attentiveness to the words at least as much as that demanded by German Lieder and French *mélodies*. Moreover, the listener's awareness of the words being sung is central to the effects he is trying to create, for Dickman's music is above all an attempt to render a form of spiritual experience. Thus, music and words work at once to interpret, enhance, and even play against one another. When, for example, we hear the cello or violin commenting in repeated phrases on a vocal utterance, both the words and the musical notes work together to draw the listener into a realm distinct from that of everyday experience.

Because of the centrality of words to Dickman's music, listeners will want to know something about the texts from which he draws as well as the connections between these texts. Among the authors drawn on for the present selection, the Persian poet Rumi (1207–1273) is notable for his words used in four of the pieces—"Who says words . . ." and the first three sections of *Four for Tom*. Rumi was among the foremost writers representing Sufism, a mode of spiritual practice that developed within an Islamic setting but whose basic beliefs remain independent of Islam. Sufists cultivate ways of

achieving ecstatic states within the context of the natural world.

The key images of Sufist writing—wine, touch, music above all—suggest the means by which these states are achieved. Anglophone readers are generally familiar with some Sufist ideas through Edward Fitzgerald's classic rendering of the Sufist poet Omar Khayyam during the Victorian period; similarly, German readers were introduced to Sufism through Goethe's adaptations (some later realized musically by Schubert) of Hafiz.

But in recent years it is Rumi's poetry, more than that of any other Sufist, that has attracted not only a number of translators but also such diverse composers as Glass, R. Murray Schafer, and Jonathan Harvey. Dickman has in fact been setting Rumi texts since the mid-1970s, beginning with "Songs for Three Sopranos and Three Violins." Since song is a prime way to attain the inward experience sought by Sufism, it is appropriate that these texts should realize themselves in musical form—and particularly in a form such as Dickman's, that can communicate with contemporary audiences. Indeed, the quiet joyfulness central to Dickman's musical style makes these poems especially suitable to the work of this composer. As we hear the piano's ostinato in "Dissolver of Sugar," the second of the *Four for Tom* songs, we recognize, for example, that this simple, persistent tune is the perfect expression of the speaker's longing to break his earthly bonds. Or note the rising scale in both the voice and the piano near the end of ". . . how it is," the third of these songs, as the speaker seeks union with the Deity by means of touch. Through this musical dialogue Dickman realizes the notion of what the text calls "a constant conversation" between self and God with which Rumi's text concludes.

Prominent though Rumi may be within Dickman's work, it is significant that the texts upon which he draws represent a wide variety of beliefs and cultures. Thus, the texts within this particular selection evoke modes of spiritual experience ranging from the Hasidism of *Rabbi Nathan's Prayer*; the Sufism of the Rumi texts; the Buddhism of the Tibetan saint, Milarepa, in the final of the *Four for Tom* songs; the otherworldliness suggested by the Gothic tradition in *The Music of Eric Zann*.

Although *Rabbi Nathan's Prayer*, like the other pieces, is based on Dickman's own scales, the melismas we hear suggest traditional Jewish chant. And here is a text addressed to a powerful transcendent God ("You are so powerful," the supplicant keeps saying to his Master). By contrast, the Rumi texts suggest a convivial deity, while Milarepa's Buddhism does not predicate anything at all recognizable as a supreme being. Yet the ecumenical nature of these texts by no means compromises the unity of the sounds into which they are transformed, for they all breathe the same musical and spiritual air that marks Dickman's work throughout.

A similar spiritual quality is evident in *The Music of Eric Zann*, in which a tale out of the Gothic literary tradition allows Dickman the opportunity to suggest a world beyond that of ordinary experience. The text's author is H. P. Lovecraft (1890–1937), whose horror stories evoke such earlier writers in this tradition as E. T. Hoffmann and Edgar Allen Poe. Like some of Hoffmann's tales, this narrative is centered around a weird musician, one whose very strangeness, moreover, is intimately linked to the otherworldly forces that each author seeks to invoke. The chanting nature of this unaccompanied piece helps awaken and underscore the sense of awe, indeed awe-fulness (in the primary sense of this word), that overcomes both the narrator and listener in the course of the performance. The theatrical nature of this work, though evident even without visual cues, was

underscored at its first performance in May 1999, when Thomas Buckner dressed in a cape and hat to re-create the story's Old-World setting. Yet the chant he performs proceeds by the sparest of means: Even the slightest changes in pitch, rhythm, or dynamics give us the signals we need to lead us into the mysterious other world that Eric Zann's music conjures up for us. Note, for instance, the way the voice strains upward in pitch near the end to speak of the "powers opposed to me" or of the "unknown things of the night."

Only one of the pieces on this disc, *Indian Wells*, is without text. Its title derives not from that distant land that helped liberate Dickman's musical style, but from the name of the street on which he resided at its time of composition. The solo piano plays with several scales in an improvisatory manner that gives it a theatricality without specific reference to any scene or subject matter. Yet within the context of the vocal pieces, we also recognize an otherworldly quality wholly typical of Stephen Dickman's unique world of sounds.

—Herbert Lindenberger

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*THE MUSIC OF ERIC ZANN* (H. P. Lovecraft)

(The material in italics is part of the original, but not used in the composition)

I have examined maps of the city with the greatest care, yet have never again found the Rue d'Auseil. These maps have not been modern maps alone, for I know that names change. I have, on the contrary, delved deeply into all the antiquities of the place, and have personally explored every region, of whatever name, which could possibly answer to the street I knew as the Rue d'Auseil. But despite all I have done, it remains a humiliating fact that I cannot find the house, the street, or even the locality, where during the last months of my impoverished life as a student of metaphysics at the university, I heard the music of Eric Zann.

*That my memory is broken, I do not wonder; for my health, physical and mental, was gravely disturbed throughout the period of my residence in the Rue d'Auseil, and I recall that I took none of my few acquaintances there. But that I cannot find that place again is both singular and perplexing; for it was within a half-hour's walk of the university and was distinguished by peculiarities which could hardly be forgotten by anyone who had been there. I have never met a person who has seen the Rue d'Auseil.*

The Rue d'Auseil lay across a dark river bordered by precipitous brick blear-windowed warehouses and spanned by a ponderous bridge of dark stone. It was always shadowy along that river, as if the smoke of neighboring factories shut out the sun perpetually. The river was also odorous with evil stench which I have never smelled elsewhere, and which may some day help me to find it, since I should recognize them at once. Beyond the bridge were narrow cobbled streets with rails; and then came the ascent, at first gradual, but incredibly steep as the Rue d'Auseil was reached.

I have never seen another street as narrow and steep as the Rue d'Auseil. It was almost a cliff, closed to all vehicles, consisting in several places of flights of steps, and ending at the top in a lofty ivied

wall. Its paving was irregular, sometimes stone slabs, sometimes cobblestones, and sometimes bare earth with struggling greenish-grey vegetation. The houses were tall, peaked-roofed, incredibly old, and crazily leaning backward, forward, and sidewise. Occasionally an opposite pair, both leaning forward, almost met across the street like an arch; and certainly they kept most of the light from the ground below. There were a few overhead bridges from house to house across the street.

*The inhabitants of that street impressed me peculiarly. At first I thought it was because they were all silent and reticent; but later decided it was because they were all very old. I do not know how I came to live on such a street. But I was not myself when I moved there. I had been living in many poor places, always evicted for want of money; until at last I came upon that tottering house in the Rue d'Auseil kept by the paralytic Blandot. It was the third house from the top of the street, and by far the tallest of them all.*

My room was on the fifth storey; the only inhabited room there, since the house was almost empty. On the night I arrived I heard strange music from the peaked garret overhead, and the next day asked old Blandot about it. He told me it was an old German-viol player, a strange dumb man who signed his name as Eric Zann, and who played evenings in a cheap theatre orchestra; adding that Zann's desire to play in the night after his return from the theatre was the reason he had chosen this lofty and isolated garret room, whose single gable window was the only point on the street from which one could look over the terminating wall at the declivity and panorama beyond.

*Thereafter I heard Zann every night, and although he kept me awake, I was haunted by the weirdness of his music. Knowing little of the art myself, I was yet certain that none of his harmonies had any relation to music I had heard before; and concluded that he was a composer of highly original genius. The longer I listened, the more I was fascinated, until after a week I resolved to make the old man's acquaintance.*

One night as he was returning from his work, I intercepted Zann in the hallway and told him that I would like to know him and be with him when he played. He was a small, lean, bent person, with shabby clothes, blue eyes, grotesque, satyr-like face, and nearly bald head; and at my first words seemed both angered and frightened. My obvious friendliness, however, finally melted him; and he grudgingly motioned me to follow him up the dark, creaking and rickety attic stairs. *His room, one of the only two in the steeply pitched garret, was on the west side, toward the high wall that formed the upper end of the street. Its size was very great, and seemed the greater because of its extraordinary barrenness and neglect. Of furniture there was only a narrow iron bedstead, a dingy washstand, a small table, a large bookcase, an iron music-rack, and three old-fashioned chairs. Sheets of music were piled in disorder about the floor. The walls were of bare boards, and had probably never known plaster; whilst the abundance of the dust and cobwebs made the place seem more deserted than inhabited.* Evidently Eric Zann's world of beauty lay in some far cosmos of the imagination.

Motioning me to sit down, the dumb man closed the door, turned the large wooden bolt, and lighted a candle to augment the one he had brought with him. He now removed his viol from his moth-eaten covering, and taking it, seated himself in the least uncomfortable of the chairs. He did not employ the music rack, but offering no choice and playing from memory, enchanted me for over an hour with strains I had never heard before; *strains which must have been of his own devising. To describe their exact nature is impossible for one unversed in music.* They were a kind of fugue, with recurrent

passages of the most captivating quality, but to me were notable for the absence of any of the weird notes I had overheard from my room below on other occasions.

Those haunting notes I had remembered, and had often hummed and whistled inaccurately to myself, so when the player at length laid down the bow I asked him if he would render some of them. As I began my request the wrinkled satyr-like face lost the bored placidity it had possessed during the playing, and seemed to show the same curious mixture of anger and fright which I had noticed when I had first accosted the old man. For a moment I was inclined to use persuasion, regarding rather lightly the whims of senility; and even tried to awaken my host's weirder mood by whistling a few of the strains to which I had listened the night before. But I did not pursue this course for more than a moment; for when the dumb musician recognized the whistled air his satyr-like face grew suddenly distorted with an expression wholly beyond analysis, and his long, old, bony right hand reached out to stop my mouth and silence the crude imitation. As he did this he further demonstrated his eccentricity by casting a startled glance toward the lone curtained window, as if fearful of some intruder—a glance doubly absurd, since the garret stood high and inaccessible above all the adjacent roofs, this window being the only point on the steep street, as the concierge had told me, from which one could see over the wall at the summit.

The old man's glance brought Blandot's remark to mind, and with a certain capriciousness I felt a wish to look out over the wide and dizzying panorama of moonlight roofs and city lights beyond the hilltop, which of all the dwellers in the Rue d'Auseil only this crabbed musician could see. I moved toward the window and would have drawn aside the nondescript curtains, when with a frightened rage even greater than before, the dumb lodger was upon me again; this time motioning with his head toward the door as he nervously strove to drag me thither with both hands. Now thoroughly disgusted with my host, I ordered him to release me, and told him that I would go at once. His clutch relaxed, and as he saw my disgust and offense, his own anger seemed to subside. He tightened his relaxing grip, but this time in a friendly manner, forcing me into a chair; then with the appearance of wistfulness crossing to a littered table, where he wrote many words with a pencil, in the laboured French of a foreigner.

The note which he finally handed me was an appeal for tolerance and forgiveness. Zann said that he was old, lonely, and afflicted with strange fears and nervous disorders connected with his music and with other things. He had enjoyed my listening to his music, and wished I would come again and not mind his eccentricities. But he could not play to another his weird harmonies, and could not bear hearing them from another; nor could he bear having anything in his room touched by another. He had not known until our hallway conversation that I could overhear his playing in my room, and now asked if I would arrange with Blandot to take a lower room where I could not hear him in the night. He would, he wrote, defray the difference in rent.

As I sat deciphering the execrable French, I felt more lenient toward the old man. He was a victim of nervous and physical suffering as was I; and my metaphysical studies had taught me kindness. In the silence there came a slight sound from the window—the shutter must have rattled in the night wind, and for some reason I started almost as violently as did Eric Zann. So when I had finished reading, I shook my host by the hand, and departed as a friend.

The next day Blandot gave me a more expensive room on the third floor, between the apartments of an aged money-lender and the room of a respectable upholsterer. There was no one on the fourth floor.

It was not long before I found that Zann's eagerness for my company was not as great as it had seemed while he was persuading me to move down from the fifth storey. He did not ask me to call on him, and when I did call he appeared uneasy and played listlessly. This was always at night—in the day he slept and would admit no one. My liking for

*him did not grow, though the attic room and the weird music seemed to hold and odd fascination for me. I had a curious desire to look out of that window, over the wall and down the unseen slope at the glittering roofs and spires which must lie outspread there. [But Zann motioned me away and I departed. (not in the original)]* Once I went up to the garret during theatre hours, when Zann was away, but the door was locked.

*What I did succeed in doing was to overhear the nocturnal playing of the dumb old man. At first I would tip-toe up to my old fifth floor, then, I grew bold enough to climb to the last creaking staircase to the peaked garret. There in the narrow hall, outside the bolted door with the covered keyhole, I often heard sounds which filled me with an indefinable dread—the dread of vague wonder and brooding mystery. It was not that the sounds were hideous, for they were not; but that they held vibrations suggesting nothing on this globe of earth. Certainly, Eric Zann was a genius of wild power. As the weeks passed, the playing grew wilder, whilst the old musician acquired an increasing haggardness and furtiveness pitiful to behold. He now refused to admit me at any time, and shunned me whenever we would meet on the stairs.*

Then one night as I listened at the door, I heard the shrieking viol swell into a chaotic babel of sound; a pandemonium which would have led me to doubt my own shaking sanity had there not come from behind that barred portal a piteous proof that the horror was real—the awful, inarticulate cry which only a mute can utter, and which rises only in moments of the most terrible fear or anguish. I knocked repeatedly at the door, but received no response. *Afterward I waited in the black hallway, shivering with cold and fear, till I heard the poor musician's feeble effort to rise from the floor by the aid of a chair. Believing him conscious after a fainting fit, I renewed my rapping, at the same time calling out his name reassuringly.* I heard Zann stumble to the window and close both shutter and sash, then stumble to the door, which he falteringly unfastened to admit me. This time his delight at having me present was real; for his distorted face gleamed with relief while he clutched at my coat as a child clutches at his mother's skirts.

Shaking pathetically, the old man forced me into a chair. He sank into another, beside which his viol and bow lay carelessly on the floor. He sat for some time inactive, nodding oddly, but having a paradoxical suggestion of intense and frightened listening. *Subsequently he seemed to be satisfied, and crossing to a chair by the table wrote a brief note, handed it to me, and returned to the table, where he began to write rapidly and incessantly. The note implored me in the name of mercy, and for the sake of my own curiosity, to wait where I was while he prepared a full account in German of all the marvels and terrors which beset him. I waited, and the dumb man's pencil flew.*

*It was perhaps an hour later, while I still waited and while the old musician's feverishly written sheets continued to pile up, that I saw Zann start as from the hint of a horrible shock. Unmistakably he was looking at the curtained window and listening shudderingly. I half fancied I heard a sound myself; though it was not a horrible sound, but rather an exquisitely low and infinitely distant musical note, suggesting a player in one of the neighboring houses, or in some abode beyond the lofty wall over which I had never been able to look. (a shriller, steadier note that was not from the viol; a calm deliberate, purposeful, mocking note from far away in the West. [out of sequence here])* Upon Zann the effect was terrible, for, dropping his pencil, *suddenly* he rose, seized his viol, and commenced to rend the night with the wildest playing I had ever heard from his bow *save when listening at the barred door.*

It would be useless to describe the playing of Eric Zann on that dreadful night. It was more horrible than anything I had ever overheard, because I could now see the expression of his face, *and could realize that this time the motive was* stark fear. He was trying to make a noise; to ward something off or drown something out—what, I could not imagine *awesome though I felt it must be. The playing grew fantastic, delirious, and hysterical, yet kept to the last the qualities of supreme genius which I knew this strange old man possessed. I recognized the air—it was a wild Hungarian dance popular in the theatres, and I reflected for a moment that this was the first time I had ever heard Zann play the work of another composer.*

Louder and louder, wilder and wilder, mounted the shrieking and whining of that desperate viol. The player was dripping with perspiration and twisted like a monkey, always looking frantically at the curtained window. In his frenzied strains I could almost see shadowy satyrs and bacchanals dancing and whirling insanely through the seething abysses of clouds, smoke and lightening.

*At this juncture* the shutter began to rattle in a howling night wind which had sprung up outside as if in answer to the mad playing within. Zann's screaming viol now outdid itself, emitting sounds I had never thought a viol could emit. The shutter rattled more loudly, unfastened, and commenced slamming against the window. The glass broke, and the chill wind rushed in, making the candles sputter *and rustling the sheets of paper on the table where Zann had begun to write his horrible secret.* I looked at Zann. His blue eyes were bulging, glassy, sightless, and the frantic playing had become a blind, mechanical unrecognizable orgy that no pen could even suggest.

A sudden gust, stronger than the others, caught up the manuscript and bore it toward the window. I followed the flying sheets in desperation, but they were gone before I reached the demolished panes. Then I remembered my old wish to gaze from this window, the only window in the Rue d'Auseil from which one might see the slope beyond the wall, and the city outspread beneath. It was very dark, but the city's lights always burned, and I expected to see them there amidst the rain and wind. Yet when I looked from that highest of all gable windows, looked while the candles sputtered and the insane viol howled with the night wind, I saw no city spread below, and no friendly lights gleamed from remembered streets, but only the blackness of space illimitable; unimagined space alive with motion and music, and having no semblance of anything on earth. As I stood there looking in terror, the wind blew out both the candles in that ancient garret, leaving me in a savage and impenetrable darkness with chaos and pandemonium before me, and the demon madness of that night-baying viol behind me.

I staggered back in the dark, without the means of striking a light, crashing against the table, overturning a chair, and finally groping my way to the place where the blackness screamed with choking music. To save myself and Eric Zann I could at least try, whatever the powers opposed to me. Suddenly out of the blackness the madly sawing bow struck me, and I knew I was close to the player. I felt ahead, touched the back of Zann's chair, and then found and shook his shoulder in an effort to bring him to his senses. He did not respond, and still the viol shrieked on without slackening. I moved my hand to his head, whose mechanical nodding I was unable to stop, and shouted in his ear that we must both flee from the unknown things of the night. But he neither answered me nor abated the frenzy of his music, while all through the garret strange currents of wind seemed to dance in the darkness. When my hand touched his ear I shuddered, though I knew not why—knew not till I felt the still face; the ice-cold, stiffened, unbreathing face whose glassy eyes bulged uselessly into the void. And then, by some miracle, finding the door and the large wooden

bolt, I plunged wildly away from that glassy-eyed thing in the dark, and from the ghoulish howling of that accursed viol whose fury increased even as I plunged.

Leaping, floating, flying down those endless stairs through the dark house; racing mindlessly out into the narrow, steep, ancient street of steps and tottering houses; clattering down steps and over cobbles to the lower streets and the putrid canyon-walled river; panting across the great dark bridge to the broader, healthier streets and boulevards we know; all these are terrible impressions that linger with me. And I recall that there was no wind, and that the moon was out, and that all the lights of the city twinkled.

Despite my most careful searches and investigations, I have never since been able to find the Rue d'Auseil. But I am not wholly sorry; either for this or for the loss in undreamable abysses of the closely-written sheets which alone could have explained the music of Eric Zann.

*The Music of Eric Zann.* H. P. Lovecraft

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RABBI NATHAN'S PRAYER (Rabbi Nathan of Bratslav)  
(Words in italic are not in the original)

Master Master Master Master Master of of Master Master of the Universe Help me! *Help me!* Master Master Master Master Master Master help me! *Help me!* You work in amazing ways. You work in amazing ways! *You work in amazing ways. Help me! Help me!* Your love is so powerful. *Your love is so powerful. Your love is so powerful. Help me. Help me.* Help me to be able to make myself happy at all times. *Help me. Help me to be able to make myself happy at all times. Help me.* You work in amazing ways. *You work in amazing ways. You work in amazing ways. Help me. Help me!* Your love is so powerful. *Your love is so powerful. Your love is so powerful. Help me. Help me.* Help me to be able to make myself happy at all times. *Help me. Help me to be able to make myself happy at all times. Help me! Help me!* I am broken and shattered *and broken and shattered.* Master Master Master *Your love is so powerful. Your love is so powerful. Your love love is so powerful.* Help me to be happy happy at all times. *Help me!*

FOUR FOR TOM

Now That I Know How It Is (Rumi)  
(Words in italic are not in the original)

I'm here by the gate.  
Maybe you'll throw open a door and call.  
I'm drenched with being here,  
rambling drunk. Things dissolve around me,  
but I'm still sitting here.



One clap in the emptiness of space. New centuries begin.  
Laughter. A rose, a wise loveliness, the sun  
coming out brilliantly, on horse-back.  
All this day we'll be close, drinking and joking,  
close to your face. Whenever I say your face, *Whenever I say your  
face, Whenever I say your face,*  
my soul jumps out of its skin!

Is there some other roof somewhere? Any name  
other than yours? Any glass of wine other than this  
you bring me so perfectly?  
If I find my life, I'll never let go, *I'll never let go,*  
holding and twisting the cloth of your coat  
as in that dream when I saw you. *when I saw you.*

By this gate kings are waiting with me. *By this gate kings are waiting  
with me. Kings are waiting with me.*  
Your eyes, I'm lost remembering your eyes. *Your eyes*  
Look at us out here moaning with our shirts ripped open. *Look at us  
out here moaning with our shirts ripped open.*  
Anyone seeing your face and not obsessed with the sight  
is cold as a rock in the ground.  
What further curse could I put on him?

What's worse than having no word from you?  
Don't waste your life with those who don't see you.  
*those who don't see you*  
Stay with us. We're running across the beach,  
torn loose from friends, making friends with the sea.  
One flood moves in its sleep. One's confused  
out of its channel. One says All praise to God.  
Another, No strength but yours.

You are the sunlight come as wagon loads of presents  
and free wine for the poor.  
A rose looks up and the calyx rips open.  
The lute player with quick fingers sees your hands  
and stops and closes her eyes.

Who is the luckiest in this whole orchestra? The reed.  
Its mouth touches your lips to learn music.  
All reeds, sugar cane especially, think only  
of this chance. They sway in the cane-breaks,  
free in the many ways they dance.

Without you the instruments would die.  
One sits close beside you, Another takes a long kiss.  
The tambourine begs, Touch my skin so I can be myself.  
Let me feel you enter each limb bone by bone,  
that what died last night can be whole today.

Why live some soberer way *some soberer way*... and feel life ebbing out?  
*ebbing out?*

I won't do it. *I won't do it. I won't do it.*  
Either give me enough wine or leave me alone,  
now that I know how it is *now that I know how it is*  
to be with you in a constant conversation.

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Dissolver of Sugar (Rumi)  
(Words in italic are not in the original)

Dissolver of sugar, dissolve me,  
if this is the time.  
Do it gently with a touch of a hand, or a look. *If this is the time.*  
Every morning I wait at dawn. *Is this the time?* That's when it's  
happened before.  
Or do it suddenly like an execution. How else  
can I get ready for death? *Is this the time?*

You breathe without a body like a spark.  
You grieve, and I begin to feel lighter.  
You keep me away with your arm,  
but the keeping away is pulling me in.  
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The Music (Rumi)  
(Words in italic are not in the original)

For sixty years I have been forgetful,  
every minute, *every minute, every minute*, but not for a second  
has the flowing toward me stopped or slowed.  
I deserve nothing. *nothing.* To day I recognize  
that I am the guest the mystics talk about.  
I play this living music for my Host. *for my Host.*  
Everything today is for the Host.  
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Milarepa's Closing Verse (Milarepa)  
(Words in italic are not in the original)

I'm a yogin. *I'm a yogin. I'm a yogin.*  
A beggar who travels alone.  
A pauper who's got nothing.  
I left behind the land of my birth.  
Turned my back on my own fine house.  
And gave up my fertile fields.  
I stayed in mountain retreats.  
Practiced in rock caves in snow.  
And found food as the birds do.  
That's how its been up to now.  
There's no telling the day of my death,  
But I have a purpose before I die.  
That's the story of me the yogin;  
Now I'll give you some advice.  
Trying to control the events of this life,  
Trying *and trying* to be so clever,  
Always planning to manipulate your world,  
Involved in repetitive social relations . . .  
In the midst of these preparations for the future  
You arrive unaware at your final years.  
Not realizing your brow is knit with wrinkles,  
Not knowing your hair is turned white,  
Not seeing the skin of your eyes sink down,  
Not admitting the sag of your mouth and nose.  
Even while chased by the envoys of death  
You still sing and rejoice in pleasure.  
Not knowing if life will last till morning  
You still make plans for tomorrow's future  
Not knowing where rebirth will occur  
You still maintain a complacent contentment.  
Now's the time to get ready for death—  
That's my sincere advice to you;  
If its import strikes you, start your practice.  
*Milarepa's Closing Verse* reprinted by permission of Wisdom Publications Inc.

WHO SAYS WORDS (Rumi)  
(Words in italic are not in the original)

All day I think about it,  
then at night, *in the dark*, I say it.  
Where did I come from,  
and what should I be doing?  
I have no idea.  
My soul is from elsewhere,  
I'm sure of that,  
and I intend to end up there.

This drunkenness began in some other tavern.  
When I get back around to that place,  
I'll be completely sober.  
Meanwhile, I'm like a bird from another continent,  
sitting in this aviary.  
The day is coming when I fly off,  
but who is it now in my ear,  
who hears my voice?  
Who says words with my mouth?  
*Who hears my voice?*  
Who looks out with my eyes?  
*Who says words with my mouth?*  
*Who looks out with my eyes?*  
What is the soul?  
I cannot stop asking.  
*What is the soul?*  
If I could taste one sip of an answer,  
*if I could taste one sip of an answer,*  
*if I could taste one sip of an answer,*  
I could break out of this prison for drunks.  
I didn't come here of my own accord,  
and I can't leave that way.  
Whoever brought me here will have to take me back.  
This poetry. I never know what I'm going to say.  
I don't plan it.  
When I'm outside the saying of it,  
I get very quiet and rarely speak at all.  
From *Open Secret*. Reprinted by permission of Threshold Books, Aptos, California.

**Stephen Dickman** earned his B.A. in music composition and theory in 1965 from Bard College, where he studied with Jacob Druckman, and an M.F.A. in 1968 from Brandeis University, which he attended on a fellowship, studying with Arthur Berger and Harold Shapero. While he was at Brandeis, he received two BMI Student Composer Awards (1968 and 1969) and the Columbia University Joseph H. Bearns Prize (1969). Following a fellowship to the Berkshire Music Center at Tanglewood (1968), he moved to New York City. There with playwright Richard Foreman, Dickman wrote his first opera, *Real Magic In New York*, a radically minimalist work that was premiered at the Film Makers Cinematheque in Soho in 1970. After a New York Composer's Forum in 1971, he was awarded a Fulbright to Rome (1971–1972). He remained in Europe and Asia for four years. While traveling, he wrote *Musical Journeys*, four volumes exploring primary musical ideas.

In 1973 Dickman was invited to Bombay, India, to study *sarangi* (a bowed Indian instrument) with Pandit Ram Narayan. This work led to his *Song Cycle for Three Violins and Three Sopranos*, settings of the poetry of Jalal al-Din Rumi. Continuing his exploration of scales inspired by his study of Indian music, Dickman wrote *The Wheels Of Ezekiel* (1985) for chamber orchestra and *Trees and Other Inclinations* (1983) for piano and *Orchestra by the Sea* (1983) for full orchestra. His *Maximus Song Cycle* (1986), with

poetry by Charles Olson, was premiered in 1987. Also in 1987 Stephen Dickman began a collaboration with librettist Gary Glickman on a new opera, *Tibetan Dreams*. In 1989 this work received the National Endowment for the Arts, Artist as Producer/New American Works Award. With the help of this grant the opera was completed and produced in New York City in October of 1990 at the Cunningham Dance Studio.

Currently Dickman is working on a musical, *The Violin Maker*, by playwright Dicky Nesenger. *Who Says Words* for baritone and cello, *Words/No More* for vocal quartet and selections from the *Duets* were performed at Weill Recital Hall in May 1996 in Thomas Buckner's concert series, "Interpretations." Dickman also founded and organized a music series, "New Music in the Hamptons." He has also been awarded an American Composers Forum Commission to set the words of a Montauk Native American in celebration of the 350th Birthday of East Hampton in 1998.

Over the past thirty years, baritone **Thomas Buckner** has achieved notable success as an innovative performer of some of the most adventurous music of the twentieth century. Through his work with both established and emerging contemporary composers and improvisers, Buckner continues to be a pioneer in a wide range of musical contexts, mixing genres and breaking barriers in his continuing pursuit of the yet-to-be-imagined. Recent performances include: a duo concert with Cecil Taylor at the Festival of Music of Extended Duration in Prague; the world premier of Roscoe Mitchell's "Fallen Heroes," with the Orchestra of the S.E.M. Ensemble at Lincoln Center and at the Prague Spring Festival; a duo concert with pianist Varyan Weston at the Zyd Netherlands Jazz Festival; and Robert Ashley's "When Famous Last Words Fail You," with the American Composers Orchestra at Carnegie Hall. Buckner's three solo CDs, "Full Spectrum Voice," "Sign of the Times," and "Inner Journey," all feature commissioned works by an impressive array of composers and are available on the Lovely Music label. Since 1989 he has co-produced the contemporary music series Interpretations with the World Music Institute in New York City.

Versatile soprano **Elizabeth Farnum** specializes in twentieth-century music and is an active performer in the oratorio and recital fields. In demand for her performances of new music, she has premiered pieces by Luciano Berio, Tristan Keuris, and John Schlenck at Alice Tully Hall. Other premieres include Charles Wuorinen's "Fenton Songs," Toby Twining's *Requiem*, James Bassi's "Carol Symphony," Anthony Braxton's opera, *Shala Fears for the Poor* (in which she created the role of Alva), and Roland Moser's "Nach Deutsche Volksliederen," with the modern music ensemble Parnassus. Elizabeth is a member of the Rialto Ensemble and the early-music group Pomerium, and has appeared as soloist with the Waverly Consort, Musica Sacra, Bach Works, and the New York Virtuoso Singers. Ms. Farnum is featured on recordings of Koch International, Helicon, Bis, Vox, and North/South Records, and her world premiere recording of the songs of Kaikhosru Sorabji is scheduled to be released in 2000. She has recorded four CDs for Deutsche Grammophon with Pomerium, the third of which was nominated for a Grammy.

Presently living in New York City, cellist **Michael Finckel** maintains a busy schedule as a performer, teacher, and conductor. As a soloist and chamber musician he has appeared in concert halls and venues throughout the United States and Europe. Currently a member of the Eberli Ensemble, he has been a member and guest performer with numerous chamber ensembles including the Ysaye, Audubon, Atlantic, and Meridian string quartets, the Omega Ensemble, and the New England Arts Ensemble. As an advocate of the music of our time, he has performed with some of New York's leading

contemporary music ensembles, including the Group for Contemporary Music, The New York New Music Ensemble, Speculum Musicae, Steve Reich and Musicians, The Contemporary Chamber Ensemble, the Orchestra of Our Time, the S.E.M. Ensemble, the American Composer's Orchestra, and the New York Philharmonic "Rug Series Concerts" under Pierre Boulez. In 1992 he was appointed music director of the Sage City Symphony in Bennington, Vermont, a community orchestra nationally recognized for its commissioning program. A proponent of expanding the literature for cello through presenting new compositions by living composers, he has participated in several hundred premiere performances and has recorded new works for Vanguard, Vox/Candide, CRI, and ECM/Warner Bros.

**Gregor Kitzis**, violin, has performed and recorded with The Orchestra of St. Luke's, Blanche Moyses's New England Bach Festival, Concordia, and Bang on a Can's Spit Orchestra, as well as with new music groups including Ensemble 21, North/South Consonance, Essential Music, Common Sense, The Group for Contemporary Music, and the Crosstown, Xenakis, and S.E.M. Ensembles, and bands including Songs From a Random House, Gawk, Church of Betty, and Voltaire, playing everything from solo and chamber music recitals and Broadway shows to rock, ragtime, klezmer, Indian, and tango in venues ranging from Carnegie, Merkin, Avery Fisher and Alice Tully halls to CBGB's, The Kitchen, The Knitting Factory, Saturday Night Live, Live From Lincoln Center, and the David Letterman, Rosie O'Donnell and Jay Leno shows as well as new-music and jazz festivals throughout the U.S., Canada, and Europe. He has worked with artists ranging from Anthony Braxton, Elliot Sharp, and Don Byron to John Cage, Morton Feldman, Elliot Carter, and George Crumb. Of his performance of Nils Vigeland's "Ives Music," *The New York Times* called it, "scratchier and more mistuned than even Ives would have found amusing."

**Joseph Kubera**, piano, has gained international renown as a major interpreter of contemporary music. He has appeared at such major festivals as the Prague Spring, Berlin Inventionen Festival, and New Music America. Mr. Kubera has been awarded grants through the NEA Solo Recitalist Program, the Foundation for Contemporary Performance Arts, and other arts organizations. A leading proponent of the music of John Cage, he is one of the few pianists performing the difficult works from the fifties through the seventies; he has recorded the complete "Music of Changes" and the Piano Concert, and has toured with the Merce Cunningham Dance Company at Cage's invitation. Mr. Kubera is a core member of S.E.M. Ensemble, the Downtown Ensemble, and Roscoe Mitchell's New Chamber Ensemble, and he has performed with a broad range of New York ensembles including the Brooklyn Philharmonic, Essential Music, New York New Music Ensemble, and Steve Reich and Musicians. He has worked closely with such composers as Anthony Coleman, Alvin Lucier, Robert Ashley, LaMonte Young, and "Blue" Gene Tyranny. Solo recordings include Cage's "Music of Changes" on Lovely Music and Cowell's "Nine Ings" on New Albion. He has also recorded for the Wergo, O.O. Discs, 1750 Arch, and Opus One labels.

## **DISCOGRAPHY**

*Love, The Hierophant.* Phyllis Bryn-Julson, Fabian Sydnor, Nancy Young, sopranos; Benjamin Hudson, Joel Lester, Carol Zeavin, violins; Arthur Weisberg, conductor. CRI SD 498.

*My Love Makes Me Lonely.* Phyllis Bryn-Julson, Fabian Sydnor, Nancy Young, sopranos; Benjamin Hudson, Joel Lester, Carol Zeavin, violins; Arthur Weisberg, conductor. CRI SD 498.

*The Song of the Reed.* Phyllis Bryn-Julson, Fabian Sydnor, Nancy Young, sopranos; Benjamin Hudson, Joel Lester, Carol Zeavin, violins; Arthur Weisberg, conductor. CRI SD 498.

*Trees and Other Inclinations*. Nils Vigeland, piano. Opus One Records 140.  
*The Wheels of Ezekiel*. North/South Consonance, Max Lifchitz conductor. Opus One Records 140.

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*Indian Wells* was premiered at The John Drew Theatre of Guild Hall, East Hampton, NY in 1988 by Beatriz Roman.

*Rabbi Nathan's Prayer* was premiered at the Bridgehampton Presbyterian Church in 1997 by Elizabeth Farnum and Gregor Kitzis.

*Who Says Words* was premiered at the Weill Recital Hall of Carnegie Hall, New York, in 1996 by Thomas Buckner and Michael Finckel.

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**STEPHEN DICKMAN (b. 1943) 80573-2**  
**WHO SAYS WORDS**

1 *The Music of Eric Zann* (short story by H. P. Lovecraft) (1998) (ms; BMI) 20:52  
Thomas Buckner, baritone

2 *Indian Wells* (1985) (ms; BMI) 9:22  
Joseph Kubera, piano

3 *Rabbi Nathan's Prayer* (words by Rabbi Nathan of Bratslav) (1995) (ms; BMI) 8:00  
Elizabeth Farnum, soprano and Gregor Kitzis, violin

*Four For Tom* (1997) (ms; BMI)

4 How It Is (poem by Rumi) 8:10

5 Dissolver of Sugar (poem by Rumi) 4:41

6 The Music (poem by Rumi) 0:48

7 Milerepa's Closing (poem by Milarepa) 6:47

Thomas Buckner, baritone; Joseph Kubera, piano

8 *Who Says Words* (poem by Rumi) (1992) (ms; BMI) 6:16

Thomas Buckner, baritone; Michael Finckel, cello

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