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CIVILIZATION AND ITS DISCONTENTS

A MUSIC THEATER COMEDY

BY MICHAEL SAHL & ERIC SALZMAN



TO BE RE-RELEASED BY LABOR RECORDS
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“...a brilliant amalgam of jazz, pop, blues, and classical forms, cleverly developed and timed to make the satiric points stand out in the most vivid musical and theatrical terms.”

– Peter G. Davis, New York Times

NEW YORK, NY – Labor Records, in conjunction with Naxos, announces a new series of recordings -- releases and re-releases -- of the innovative vocal and music-theater works of Eric Salzman, spanning over forty years. The series will begin with the release on **January 31** of the award-winning *Civilization and Its Discontents*, Salzman's words-and-music collaboration with Michael Sahl (Salzman and Sahl created no less than six such music-theater works in their long collaboration). *Civilization and Its Discontents* was originally an off-Broadway theater piece premiered by Quog Music Theater at the American Musical and Dramatic Academy in 1977, a production that won a Backstage award for best off-Broadway production of the year. It was recorded for National Public Radio at WXXI, Rochester, and WNYC, New York, and this recording, the basis of the original Nonesuch release, won a Prix Italia, the major international radio award. As a result, it was broadcast throughout the United States and around the world and, in 1997, toured in Europe.

Civilization and Its Discontents gets its title from a famous essay of Sigmund Freud about the ills of society here transformed into a lively and biting music-theater satire. Carlos Arachnid invites us to join him and his friends in Club Bide-a-wee whose motto is "If it feels good, do it!" The dancing alternates with 'freeze-frame' moments of high anxiety, angry words and sexual come-ons. Scene II is in Jill Goodheart's bedroom where a seduction scene is interrupted by a constant string of phone calls, the arrival of Jill's boyfriend and the *deus ex machina* appearance of Arachnid who brings us back to Club Bide-a-wee for a deconstructed dance orgy and an ironic morality.

Candice Earley, best known for her running role on the soap opera, *All My Children*, here shows her extraordinary four-octave vocal talents in the leading role of Jill Goodheart. The club owner, Carlos Arachnid, is played by Karl Patrick Krause and Jill's boyfriends are Jeremy Jive (Paul Binotto) and Derek Dude (William Parry). The musicians are Michael Sahl, piano, and Cleve Pozar, drums and percussion.

The next release in the series, scheduled for later 2012, will be a boxed set featuring *The Nude Paper Sermon* (with Stacy Keach; conducted by Joshua Rifkin) and *Wiretap*, a collection of four works: *Wiretap*, *Helix*, *Larynx Music*, and *Queens Collage*.

ARTISTS

Eric Salzman was born in New York City in 1933 and studied at Columbia, Princeton (Roger Sessions, Milton Babbitt) and in Europe. He is one of the founders of the new music theater and has created or co-created over two dozen music-theater pieces for stage and media. His work is innovative, involving new vocal techniques, electronic extensions, pluralistic styles and forms, as well as new media technologies. His earliest music theater works, *Foxes and Hedgehogs* and *The Nude Paper Sermon*, date from the 1960s and he has continued to work in this field over the years since, collaborating with major artists like fellow composer Michael Sahl, dancer/choreographer Daniel Nagrin, filmmaker Stan Vanderbeek, video artist Jackie Cassen, stage directors Tom O'Horgan, Rhoda Levine, Michel Rostain, Yuri Rasovsky, Antoine Laprise and Lee Nagrin, poets John Ashbery, Eva Salzman and Steven Wade; his work has been performed by Pierre Boulez, Dennis Russell Davies, Lukas Foss, Victoria Bond, William Schimmel, Rinde Eckert, Kristin Norderval, Quog Music Theater, American Music Theater Festival, Center for Contemporary Opera, La Mama, Theater for a New City, the Théâtre National du Cornouaille (Quimper, France), Théâtre du Trident (Québec), NPR, BBC, Canadian Broadcasting Company, NewOp, etc. Recent work includes *The True Last Words of Dutch Schultz*, text by Valeria Vasilevski (premiered in Amsterdam and at Symphony Space, NYC), *Jukebox in the Tavern of Love* with Ms Vasilevski (commissioned by the Western Wind; performed at New York's Flea Theater and Bargemusic in Brooklyn) and *Accord/Discord* for mezzo-soprano and tango ensemble; texts by Bertholt Brecht (Center for Contemporary Opera; toured in Eastern Europe with Laila Salins). *Big Jim & the Small-time Investors* with librettist Ned Jackson, is scheduled for performance in 2012. Salzman's *The New Music Theater: Seeing the Voice, Hearing the Body*, with Viennese composer/director Thomas Desi, was published by Oxford in 2008. Mr. Salzman is currently the Artistic Director of the Center for Contemporary Opera. His web site is www.ericssalzman.com.

Michael Sahl was born in Boston in 1934, studied with Israel Citkowitz, at Princeton with Roger Sessions and Milton Babbitt, at Tanglewood with Aaron Copland and Lukas Foss and in Europe. His music is a self-described cross-breed of classical and popular music which he calls 'funk/romantic' and includes symphonic, chamber, electronic and tape music, film and dance scores, as well as songs and music for the theater. He has performed with Judy Collins and recorded "Who Knows Where the Time Goes" for Elektra Records with her; she also recorded his "Prothelamium" on a subsequent Elektra album. Sahl has performed as a pianist with the Buffalo Ensemble for New Music, the Studio C Free Band, for dance companies and on tour; he was also pianist and arranger for The Tango Project. His recordings include *A Mitzvah for the Dead* with violinist Paul Zukofsky, *Tropes on the Salve Regina* and *String Quartet 1969*. Other works in various media include *Dances*

of *Glass*, commissioned by the New Corning Museum, Corning, N.Y., *Saltimbocca* for the Louis Falco Dance Company and *Flamingoes* for Sara Rudner; several chamber pieces combining romantic and jazz or rock elements (*Symphony 78, Doina, Fantasia*); a score arranged for Chris Stein of Blondie for the film *Union City* with Deborah Harry; and the score for *Boxes*, the sixth of the theater opera series with Eric Salzman. *Dinner and Delusion* with Nancy Manocherian was produced by the Center for Contemporary Opera and his series of operas with Margaret Yard includes *John Grace Ranter, Katrina: Voices of the Lost, Legacy, and Love in the Face of Death*. Other works include *Music for Band and Strings* and *Symphony 09 for 10 instruments*. Included on a recent Albany CD were *Jungles* for mixed ensemble and *Serenades* for solo piano. For more information see www.michaelsahl.com.

Quog Music Theater was founded in 1970 to further the development of new music theater and theater opera. Quog performed for a dozen years or so in many of the leading performances spaces and off-off-Broadway theaters in New York City, for the Pierre Boulez/N.Y. Philharmonic Perspective Encounters, on PBS (WNET in New York City, WCNY, Syracuse, N.Y.), on public radio (WBAI-FM, N.Y.; National Public Radio); on tour in Europe and in North and South America. Quog recorded for Finnadar and Nonesuch.

One Act, Three Scenes

Club Bide-a-wee

Jill's Apartment

Club Bide-a-wee

Cast (In Order of Appearance)

Karl Patrick Krause Carlos Arachnid

Candice Earley Jill Goodheart

William Parry Derek Dude

Paul Binotto Jeremy Jive

Michael Sahl Keyboards (piano, organ)

Cleve Pozar Drums, percussion

Written, composed, and directed by Michael Sahl and Eric Salzman.

"...jazz and pop elements...in addition to avantgarde traits originating in the NY experimental scene...swinging melodies that seem to stem from Gershwin, combined with strong, somewhat abrupt but exciting harmonies and surprising rhythmical accents that are reminiscent of Thelonious Monk...Kurt Weill for our time."

- Doron Nagan, Algemeen Dagblad (The Netherlands)

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