

PHIL KLINE

What the critics say...

"Kline has graduated from 'experimental' to 'original'—he's one of America's most important compositional voices—thanks to his burning urge to communicate, and not things that can be reduced to a charismatic sentence. His pieces become part of your inner life no matter how little you understand them."

— David Patrick Stearns, PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER, June 13, 2006

ZIPPO SONGS (2004 CD release on Cantaloupe and live performance):

Best CDs of 2004 ... "From the words American GI's in Vietnam etched on their Zippo lighters, Phil Kline has fashioned brilliant American lieder for the 21st century. Tinged with elements of the psychedelic 60's, they communicate with a direct vernacular eloquence."

Anne Midgette, THE NEW YORK TIMES

Record of the Year... "Few are the new pieces that demand repeated hearings, but Phil Kline's *Zippo Songs*, a setting of texts by Vietnam-era GIs, has stirred considerable attention during this US election year. The raw power of this piece is enhanced by an understated performance that keeps growing in power. I'd love to send it to everyone I know."

Ken Smith, GRAMOPHONE

Best CDs of 2004... "Startlingly restrained suite of electric lieder..."

Justin Davidson, NEWSDAY

Best CDs of 2004... "Phil Kline scores an experimental winner."

K. Leander Williams, TIME OUT NY

NUMBER ONE on John Schaefer's *New Sounds* "Top Ten of 2004" list (WNYC)

NUMBER SIX on Alex Ross's "Top Ten of 2004" list (THE REST IS NOISE)

"One of the most brutally frank song cycles ever penned."

Alex Ross, THE NEW YORKER

"Some of the most disturbing and compelling songs I've heard in ages."

David Patrick Stearns, PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER

"Kline spins subtle musical threads that suspend horror and desperation in a web of almost spiritual contemplation...The anti-war movement is coming around again."

GRAMOPHONE

"...a moving and memorable suite."

John L. Waters, THE GUARDIAN (London)

"Running an emotional gamut from anxiety to ferocity, long-distance desire to helpless despair."

Alan Lockwood, NEW YORK PRESS

"It is memorable stuff with a pointed sense of humor...almost cinematic."

Dan Buckley, TUCSON CITIZEN

"Kline's settings are at once intimate, peaceful, darkly telling, and peculiarly sacred removed and elevated, as if looking back from a higher plane."

STEREOPHILE

"This is some of the best new music I've heard this year. Kline's songs are haunting. The lyrics are simple and short (they fit on a Zippo lighter after all), the tone is quiet and subdued, and the settings are often spare (just voice and

guitar and electronics). But the overall effect combines to move you as much as a 110-person orchestra. Quite a feat. If Schubert were writing today, this is what it would sound like.”

James Glicker, former President, BALTIMORE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

UNSILENT NIGHT (2001 CD release on Cantaloupe and the annual live event):

“Unsilent Night immerses the listener in suspended wonderment, as if time itself had paused inside a string of jingle bells.”

Jon Pareles, THE NEW YORK TIMES

“Kline’s boom box-chorale parade from Washington Square Park to Tompkins Square Park has become a bona fide holiday tradition. Kline’s luminous, shimmering wash of bell tones is one of the loveliest communal new-music experiences you’ll ever encounter, and it’s never the same twice.”

K. Leander Williams, TIME OUT NY

“Gorgeously ambient.”

NEW YORK MAGAZINE

“A dreamy fruitcake of parts, tranquil even through its anarchy.”

Josef Woodard, LOS ANGELES TIMES

“A marvelously fluid, traveling spatial sound sculpture that disintegrates and reforms at nearly every stop light...

This is a holiday tradition that could give new music a good name.”

Kyle Gann, THE VILLAGE VOICE

“Here’s a gorgeous holiday-season sleeper from Bang on a Can’s label, a joyous, continuous electronic collage full of wildly pealing bells and chimes, voices, wall-of-sound textures and more, as heard from multiple boom boxes moving though the streets of Greenwich Village.”

Richard Ginell, LOS ANGELES TIMES

“If an avant-garde Christmas record exists, this is it.”

Dan Buckley, STEREOPHILE

“This is the first necessary classical recording of the 21st century.”

Thom Jurek, ALL MUSIC GUIDE

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Symphony for 21 iPods:

“Silence reigned briefly in corner of the room after another, creating the effect of electronic crickets chirping at each other across some enchanted field. The *Symphony* is a delicate lullaby.”

Zachary Lewis, NEWMUSICBOX 9/8/05

Meditations in an Emergency for orchestra and string quartet:

“Kline’s ‘Meditations in an Emergency’ immerses the quartet in all sorts of hypnotic relationships with string orchestra. The writing has motoric insistence and rhythmic elan, its chugging figures giving way to sustained solo lines and modal gestures. Kline meditates with enormous skill, establishing defined contrasts and keeping the ears seduced but never abandoned.”

Donald Rosenberg, CLEVELAND PLAIN DEALER 4/6/05

The Blue Room (String Quartet No. 2):

“Loops of the instruments combined with the live sound to form lush landscapes and swaggering, swinging grooves.”

Mark Swed, LOS ANGELES TIMES 2/28/05

“The most memorable work on the program was Phil Kline’s ‘Blue Room,’ a movement with soaring melodies and an intensity and spaciousness that put a listener in mind of Sibelius and that showed that Ethel is as adept in the

performance of lushly scored music as in punchy, vigorous works.”
Allan Kozinn, THE NEW YORK TIMES 8/15/03

“The program also included Phil Kline’s ‘Blue Room (String Quartet No. 2),’ a work of considerable beauty that uses an electronic delay to create a layering effect: the quartet essentially plays against a recording of itself.”
Allan Kozinn, THE NEW YORK TIMES 4/26/03

Reynolds Etudes (solo violin and electronics):

“Everything he does—as Cage said of Feldman’s music—is just almost too beautiful.”
Kyle Gann, THE VILLAGE VOICE 2002

Exquisite Corpses (sextet):

“The concert began with one of the more striking composers that the Bang-on-a-Canners have given relatively wide exposure to. Phil Kline first made an impression through his pieces for harmonica and boom boxes that with single-minded obsession turn simple musical materials into arrestingly elaborate sonic experiences. His ‘Exquisite Corpses’ sounds more traditional, but its sensibility is still the overlaying of bits of musical matter into a fetching musical mess.”
Mark Swed, LOS ANGELES TIMES 3/12/01

“The most gorgeous moments, with an effect like the heavens opening up, were when the Bang on a Can All-Stars slowly faded out and the taped bells, hitherto all but drowned out, emerged ringing in bright, sensuous cacophony. Kline has proved once and for all that he is a major new composer.”
Kyle Gann, THE VILLAGE VOICE 5/20/98

Yawp (voice, tape loops and 18 boomboxes):

“Outstanding too was Phil Kline’s performance of his ‘Yawp.’ By quietly keening into a succession of eight boomboxes, he built up rich textures suggestive of a moaning crowd, or of wind across the mouth of a cave. Magic was happening as one sat there. Here was a real original.”
Paul Griffiths, THE NEW YORK TIMES 12/12/00

Glow in the Dark (1998 CD release on CRI)

“Downtown Kline may be, but his sensibility is symphonic.”
Kyle Gann, THE VILLAGE VOICE 8/17/99

“Phil Kline’s *Glow in the Dark* is a true gem: a haunting, mechanical sound that carries a great deal of emotional meaning. Led Zep riffs and boom box tape loops never had such profundity.”
Leopold Froehlich, PLAYBOY Nov. 1998

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(July 2006)