

# recitement

## STEPHEN EMMER



**Stephen Emmer** is a musician/ composer from Amsterdam, Holland who spent his **60s** youth partially in India learning how to play a local windinstrument in an ashram, then he moved to the Caribbean to get taught voodoo percussion as a boy. Back in Amsterdam in the **70s** he got involved in various bands such as an experimental free jazz group, a symphonic rockgroup and an avantgarde new wave electro-noise group called Minny Pops.

His musical idealism made him create and produce a solo mini-album in the early **80s** called *Vogue Estate* where he was joined by several guestartists from the UK such as the late **Billy MacKenzie**, **Martha Ladley** and **Michael Dempsey**. The album was one of the first intentional *Soundtracks Without a Film*. After having briefly joined several UK bands such as **Lotus Eaters**, **Act** and the **Associates**, he once again went home and got involved in productionmusic for most of the **90s**, a.o. becoming the first inhouse-composer for both the main public and commercial tv-broadcasters in the Netherlands.



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Successfull yet hardened and professionally seasoned by these involvements around 2006 he felt a sudden urge to liberate himself from this 'musical warzone' of demanding and undemanding clients who were more and more requiring the productionmusic to be musically safe under the pressure of audience-ratings. He decided to return to his musical idealism of the early years and found what he was searching for: inspiration through catharsis and created **17** compositions based on literary text-fragments. The music follows no rules out-of-the-book yet refers to very different musical genres, styles and even cliché's as experienced and learned by **Emmer** in both his idealistic and commercial musical periods.

Or as his producer **Tony Visconti** puts it: '**Stephen Emmer** is one of those musicians/ composers who knows the musical rules best and therefore also how to break them.'

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Are you ready to listen? This music wants to talk. It's a cd where classic and modern spoken word is performed by famous writers (**Allen Ginsberg**), singers (**Lou Reed**) and actors (**Richard Burton**), but then reinterpreted in a fresh way to compose new and original music to each vocal performance. A kind of Rap 2.0 but then created the other way around: first the text, then the music. You could also call it Spoken Word Goes Pop where poetry becomes a filmsoundtrack, classic prose rap&rock and travelstories become jazz or chamberpop. Is it therefore an audiobook? A music album? No, it is the first of a new genre, a new listening experience whilst travelling, waiting, resting. It's the excitement of reciting literary texts with timeless quality popmusic.

The album is mixed and mastered in NYC by **Tony Visconti** and features several musical performers such as Blonde Redhead singer **Kazu Makino**, jazzmusician **Benjamin Herman**, legendary pianist **Mike Garson** (Bowie, Smashing Pumpkins), classical singer **Maja Roodveldt**, old school rapper **Shyrock**, **Joost Kroon** of New Cool Collective and popduo **Bauer**.

Vocal performers are **Lou Reed**, **Allen Ginsberg**, **Sylvia Kristel** (Emanuelle), **Kurt Schwitters**, **Jorge Luis Borges**, **Carlos Drummond de Andrade**, **Michael Lonsdale**, **Sacha de Boer**, **Ken Nordine** and **Richard Burton**.

Literary sourcetexts are from **Charles Baudelaire**, **Yoko Ono**, **Samuel Beckett**, **Alessandro Baricco**, **Christopher Fry**, **Gerard Manley Hopkins**, **Paul Theroux**, **Victoria Ocampo**, **Remco Campert**, **Hugo Claus** and **Thomas Hardy**.